

IRELAND IN THE
EUROPEAN SYSTEM



IRELAND IN THE EUROPEAN SYSTEM

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INTRODUCTION

ONE of the most remarkable contributions to current historical science is Mr. H. G. Wells's *Outline of History*. With herculean intellectual energy he has made an attempt to master the entire mass of human history, and has certainly succeeded in subjecting its most vital movements to a clear and searching scrutiny.

Although Mr. Wells is essentially scientific in his treatment of history, the fact that he is not attached to any set historical school—that he is more or less of a free lance—made him inclined to pursue an independent line of investigation—with the result that the reader has before him in an ordered series of monographs a presentation of the greatest events and ideas interpreted in a modern spirit.

Whether Mr. Wells is giving an exposition of a movement or weaving ingenious intellectual patterns on the loom of the past, his method is equally easy, powerful, and convincing. Sometimes, however, Mr. Wells seems to get imaginatively restless—the impulse to create a theory or a world after his own heart becomes uncontrollable, and while he is in that mood history is something that supplies metaphors and examples—and that is all. However, this is an aberration to which great,

and not feeble, minds are most subject. The more powerful the intelligence, apparently the stronger inclination it has to express the infinite variety of human experience in formulae of its own creation. The great mind must needs have intellectual levers by which the enormous materials of human history may be controlled.

It is in this regard we must deprecate the tendency which Mr. Wells occasionally betrays to extract from a movement more than the movement contains, to antedate social and political conceptions. This tendency to regard every period in human development as fully chiselled and symmetrical—to force men and events into conformity with some nineteenth or twentieth century formulae—is a false tendency, and exposes Mr. Wells to a charge which Montesquieu once made against Voltaire, ‘He writes for the glory of his convent like any Benedictine monk.’ The underlying conception of Mr. Wells’s historical method would seem to be the proposition that in humanity, as in the physical order, the law of evolution operates. Throughout he seems to imply that the history of man is an unbroken consecutive process of development.

But evolution, as Mr. Wells knows, is seldom or never exactly straight ahead—never consistent—and the history of man, supposing that it is subject to a similar law of progress, is never a continual advance, but rather an endless experiment in institutions and a perpetual fluctuation of ideas. It is this disposition to read into movements, however remote, ideas which are essentially

modern, to telescope history, as it were, which is the chief defect in Mr. Wells's works, but on occasions he has fallen into the gravest possible errors in point of fact.

In his references to Ireland we are offered an excellent specimen of that one-sided and inaccurate way of treating facts. 'Ireland,' according to Mr. Wells, 'as a significant land did not enter the stage of European history till the nineteenth century.' Here Mr. Wells is worse than uncritical; he is gravely in error. How manifestly such an assertion is at variance with all the historical facts! Indeed it is hard to comprehend how anybody, possessing the slightest knowledge of European history, could be capable of such an assertion. All authoritative historians are agreed that between the fifth and tenth centuries Ireland was one of the most powerful civilising influences then existing in Europe.

These centuries are the golden age of Irish achievement, for then Ireland, inspired by a consciousness of spiritual wealth, broke into the circle of European nations, and giving without stint her best services to mankind, took an effective part in the movement which formed out of a semi-barbaric Europe the stern medieval order. Many of the most ardent and creative spirits that engaged in the work of reconstructing European civilisation were Irishmen. St. Columba made Iona a centre of learning for Britain. St. Columbanus founded monastic houses all over Europe, and it is difficult to exaggerate the debt which medieval civilisation owed to these monastic

houses. Clement, another Irishman, who succeeded Alcuin as head of Charlemagne's school at Oochen, was world famous. John Scotus Erigena, an Irish monk, was the most original thinker and the dominating intellect of the ninth century. In Irish monasteries Greek was cultivated at a time when it was lost everywhere else in the West. These Irish monks were the first to push open the doors of the Hellenic world, and not till the Renaissance did mankind follow in their train.

From the fifth to the tenth century, therefore, Ireland exercised a widespread and beneficent influence on Europe, and although the barbarian invasions, which took place in the ninth and tenth centuries, caused a serious interruption in Irish cultural and political development, nevertheless throughout the Middle Ages Ireland continued to affect and be affected by various Continental movements.

Surely in presence of these facts it must strike any one who has given serious thought to the matter that Ireland is badly in need of a history which would cover its entire development and do justice to the prominent part which the Irish played in early Christian and medieval times.

If this were done worthily not only would our race - consciousness gain immensely in energy, fruitfulness, and self-belief, but hostile and inaccurate criticism would be effectually disarmed.

Research and scholarship have hardly yet advanced to the point when a survey of early and medieval Irish history could be undertaken on an adequate and consecutive plan. The immense field

of early and medieval Irish history has not yet been fully explored. No doubt considerable investigations have been going on in recent times, and veins of great richness and fertility have been opened up, but no systematic, no continuous exploration has yet taken place, so that any history which might be attempted at present could scarcely amount to more than a string of episodes—without any connecting principle or any continuous development.

If, however, a history of the early and medieval Irish history, in the present state of scholarship and documentary resources, is next to impossible, fortunately it is quite the reverse with the history of modern Ireland. Within the last century most European States have printed a vast amount of historical material from their archives. Thus an abundance of original records, State papers, and works of detail, containing references to Irish affairs, have become accessible. The great bulk of this published matter deals with affairs subsequent to the fifteenth century, and in consequence there seems to be every reason why a history of Ireland in its European relations from the sixteenth century to our times should be successfully attempted.

The following work, which will not deal with Irish internal affairs except in so far as they were the reactions of or reacted upon those of Europe, will endeavour to put into effect such a historical scheme, and at least should have the effect of helping future historians to a knowledge of the infinity of detail which lies buried in diverse sources.

The present volume, which is the first of the series, will describe and discuss the history of Ireland in the European system during the first half of the sixteenth century. The purely intellectual and artistic activities of the Irish during these years will be treated in a separate volume.

The fifteenth century is the most convenient starting-point, for thenceforward not only is a great wealth of historical material available, but in that century the medieval order completely passed away, while the growth of nationalities and the dualism of religion, which are the two distinctive features of modern history, definitely presented themselves.

If we would thoroughly understand the position of Ireland in the European system we must first form some conception of the condition of the English and Irish nations in the sixteenth century—for from their interaction the foreign relations of Ireland in great measure resulted.

There was an old English saying that no herb had ever grown that could cure the ills in the Irish body politic, and certainly the remedies applied by England had only served to accentuate the disease. To the minds of English statesmen force was the only specific which could not fail, and so time and again they had sent their men, sword in hand, to make an end of the Irish polity, but they were fighting something as intangible as a shadow, which faded and dwindled, but never perished. Consider the attacks made on Ireland by enemies other than the English. When the iron hand of an Alaric had dashed the Roman Empire to frag-

ments, vast hordes poured out of the East and North, spread over Europe like locusts and were washed even so far west as Ireland. While Europe was in the grip of this barbarism, Ireland developed in peace her spiritual and intellectual life. Beyond her shores all was darkness, while within there was light and an overflowing vitality, and by reason of its concentration this spiritual and intellectual vitality gained in power and intensity until finally it broke forth in a marvellous and abundant shower of diversified activity, which pierced the gloom of the Continent with the promise of better times.

Then Charlemagne raised the sceptre of the Caesars from the ruins of the old empire, and dreamed that great project of the Middle Ages—the unity of Church and State against the powers of darkness. But the body of this greatest warrior of medieval times had hardly been lowered into the Imperial burial vault at Aix-la-Chapelle when the pillars of Christendom collapsed and Europe was given over once again to warfare and anarchy. In good time a Saxon king built a strong and central state from the Germanic half of the ruined empire; his son, Otho, entered Italy, and, like Charlemagne, founded anew the empire of the West. We shake our heads in modern times at the folly which led the kings of Germany to follow the vain dreams of world empire before they set their own household in order. They were lured across the Alps by the phantom of the Caesars, and all Europe suffered for their obsession. Hence arose the mighty struggle of Church and State,

and for four centuries blood was spilt like water for the ideal of a universal empire. One of the results of this warfare was an almost continual series of barbarian inroads, and for generations Ireland suffered heavily at the hands of the Danes and Norsemen. But Irish civilisation, like that of Germany and France, absorbed these foreign elements and made them her own.

Again when England thought to conquer Ireland by means of the Normans a similar process of assimilation ensued. Froude, the English historian, is amazed that the Norman barons, so proud and so highly mannered, should in so short a time and so fatally succumb to the fascination of a conquered country. He can understand that Danes and Norsemen, since he rates them as little better than savages, should be captivated by the superior savagery of the Irish, but that the Normans—the proudest and most strenuous race in Europe—should undergo a like degradation passes his comprehension. For want of a better reason he ascribes this superior attraction in the Irish system to the snares of the devil; some irresistible seduction put into Irish civilisation by the father of evil enticed those gallant barons into the state of sin constituted by wearing Irish clothes and speaking the Irish language. In short, the Circe of Irish civilisation had turned these mighty wanderers into swine, and the ends of the English conquest had thus been defeated. It is typical of Froude and all his tribe that rather than admit anything meritorious in the Irish system they will elaborate the most fantastic

and far-fetched theories. The natural and simple explanation for the success of Irish civilisation happens also to be the correct one. The Normans found in the easy, coloured, and gracious society of Irishmen a life after their own heart.

The Norman conquest is a singularly interesting phase of Irish history, because it evidences the truth that Irish civilisation was powerful and seductive enough to absorb a warlike, highly charactered race where its temperament had not yet been subdued to abstract ideas of the State. The Normans were a sociable, Catholic, Anglo-French race, and being natural wanderers, creatures of impulse, when they settled down in their feudal castles all over Ireland they were instinctively attracted to the gay, imaginative, personal life of the Irish, and so in the course of time they were as 'Gaelic as the Gaelic themselves,' and life in this new land became sweet to them. It is to be remembered that until Elizabeth's time Anglisation had made but slight impression on the Irish. At the time of the Norman invasion and down to Elizabeth's reign Ireland was Gaelic to the heart, and steeped in the young hope and young power of a truly Gaelic culture. Read the Gaelic poetry of those times and you feel the throbbing life and promise of a rich civilisation. Thus the Normans became a part of the Irish nation and used their passionate, turbulent energies in its service.

We have seen the success which attended the Irish in their relations with the Normans. We must now describe the attack which was delivered on the Irish nation in the sixteenth century by

new men in a new manner. The passing of the medieval world and the coming of the Renaissance and Reformation had brought forth a new England, and it is this England—with substantially the same motives and practically the same methods—which has continued to attack the Irish nation from the sixteenth century to the present day.

The Renaissance, which at first held up the ideal of man, perfect in all his faculties, with all his energies at the flood, man equally beautiful in body and soul, was gradually to give way before the Reformation, which looked with hatred on such a conception of life. Although we do not desire to stray too far from the subject, yet if we would fully understand what England was like in the sixteenth century, we have no choice but to follow for a while the movements which overthrew the happy, spacious, passionate spirit of the Renaissance, to put in its stead a narrow Puritanism—for in the course of that change the modern English State was born.

The Renaissance, if so great a movement can be summed up in a definition, might be described as the process of transition from medieval to modern Europe. For centuries in the seclusion of the medieval world man had disciplined himself to a life of heroic simplicity, and, looking out on the world with passionate reflective gaze, had striven above all things to perfect his moral being. This concentration on the moral side of human nature had many causes, and of all these perhaps the most powerful was the terror of eternal punishment hereafter.

Then in the fourteenth century strange and new manifestations announced the certain dissolution of the medieval order. In opposition to the monastic ideal, which was the most typical product of the medieval spirit, appeared the conception that God had founded His kingdom on earth as well as in heaven, and that the natural life, like the life of the spirit, should be brought to the highest pitch of perfection possible. In some measure this was a return to Paganism, for it had nothing of the asceticism of the saints, but much of that delight in an easy, abundant, natural life which the Pagans honoured greatly, and upon which even Ulysses, the wisest man of Greek antiquity, set his heart.

From this conception of life sprang the Renaissance in an inexhaustible fountain. The imagination of the age suddenly caught fire, and leaping forward men found themselves on the threshold of a new world. That generation which arose in Italy towards the close of the fourteenth century, having once thrown off medieval habits of self-denial, surrendered itself almost wholly to the worship of natural beauty, and in its quest it arrived at the classical world into which it was led by men of genius—such as Petrarch and Boccaccio.

From the start the great danger was that man, yet half medieval, would be unable to adjust his energies to the mighty inflow of new forces which the Renaissance brought in its train, that either he would lose his spiritual balance and be swept into reaction against much that was living and

fruitful in the new thought, or that he would go to the other extreme and fall into the moral corruption which formed the worst part of the classical inheritance.

The supreme need of the time, therefore, was that Europe should pass through the transition from medieval to modern times without the loss of anything vital, anything irreparable in its nature — that medieval and modern thought should blend in perfect unity, that Catholicism, as it were, should also subdue the Hellenistic world to its moral purpose, driving therefrom only what was wholly impure and evil, treating with a wise indulgence what the intellect and imagination of Hellenism had so excellently created.

The effort to knead what was best in Paganism into one whole with Catholicism constitutes the noblest epoch in the Renaissance, and was to be the means of producing some of the most powerful imaginative intellects which the world of art has known. When we think of those who worked in that tradition a host of splendid names spring to the mind. Amongst the greatest are Dante, though he died in the year 1321, Petrarch, Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Castiglione, Michelangelo, Raffaello, Bramante, Contarini, Sadoletto.

So irresistible was this Catholic tendency that in its earlier stages there was little thought that any essential contradiction existed between Catholicism and the Renaissance, but on the contrary, as we have been saying, there was much thought that a union of these strongest living forces would be fruitful of excellent results for

mankind. It was felt everywhere that Catholicism had wings wide enough to shelter all that was best in thought and imagination, for had not the supreme imaginative energy of medieval Catholicism—Alighieri Dante, whose will had, as it were, identified itself with the dynamic will of medieval Catholicism—so deepened and widened the intellectual sympathies of Catholicism that this new movement in thought seemed to lie strictly within its bounds.

Marsilio Ficino, Castiglione, and Pico della Mirandola came later, and proved that a mysticism worthy of St. Bernard of Clairvaux could be mixed with a leavening of Graeco-modern thought, and not be any less Catholic for all that. During the best part of the fifteenth century these two main streams of human thought ran together in one full deep current. Catholic kings and nobles introduced the poets and artists of the Renaissance into their courts, oftentimes set them their tasks, praising or blaming, as they were called on, their elaborate craftsmanship and splendid polished speeches. Then in the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the greatest period of the Renaissance came, when Bramante, Michelangelo, Raffaele were in the full flush of creative energy, as if to typify the union of the new thought with Catholicism, they worked under the patronage and sometimes under the personal direction of Pope Julius II. and his successor Pope Leo X.

In a like spirit Michelangelo depicted on the roof of the Sistine Chapel the Pagan Sibyls amongst the Patriarchs and Prophets, in order to

signify that Graeco-Roman Paganism was a stage in human development preparatory to the coming of Christianity. The highest and clearest expression of this conception of an inner relationship between pagan antiquity and Christianity is to be found in Raffaello's four great pictures of the Camera della Segnatura. Into these four pictures is crowded the whole meaning of the Catholic Renaissance. Here all the resources of an immense genius are called upon to represent the energies of the ideal man—beautiful alike in body and soul—striving towards God. In the solemn vision of Michelangelo the Renaissance and Catholicism seemed at last to have attained a perfect understanding; but almost immediately is to be distinguished a gradual separation of Catholic and Renaissance ideals, the ebbing out of the flood, until by the year 1518 we find that this 'conflagration of all the energies of active life,' to borrow a phrase applied to similar movements, is dying down into a reaction against Catholicism, which in the course of time developed into the Reformation.

This was a great disaster for modern Europe, for had the movement of intellectual unity which Raffaello, Michelangelo, and so many other powerful minds represented in the end succeeded, there is more than a strong probability that the Reformation, if it came at all, would have come without enthusiasm or driving power, and that as a consequence the modern State would have taken a different and certainly less absolute form. But even when they seemed most inseparable the

Renaissance and Catholicism were not in complete inner harmony. All the while, at the heart of the immense intellectual and imaginative discoveries which man had made on his entry into the gardens of the Ancient world nestled, like a corrupting worm, the sensual tendency which had undermined the strength of Greece and Rome. From the first there had been manifest in the Renaissance a certain tendency towards moral corruption. Lorenzo Valla, Beccodelli, and many others belonged to a school of sensualists which had made its headquarters at Florence so early as the year 1450, and they and their followers openly scoffed at Christianity and plumed themselves on their immoralities. As time went on this tendency towards sensual degeneracy increased in power, and when Savonarola, for preaching a strict morality, was brought to the stake, the Renaissance lost gradually its lofty and religious character, until finally it became but 'a revel of intellectual and sensual luxury.'

The period of decadence which set in after the failure of the Catholic Renaissance reached its culmination when Machiavelli, persuaded by what he had seen in Florence during the career of Savonarola that the wicked were destined to inherit the earth, began to look on the world with the eyes of modern realism, and created in consequence the theory of State Absolutism.

We have given so much attention to the effort to make the change from medieval to modern times an easy, rich, sustained development because out of its failure came first the doctrine

of State Absolutism and somewhat later the Reformation, which reasserted that doctrine, and which, by effecting the separation of religious and political powers, cleared the ground for its practice.

It has been established again and again that the decadent Renaissance and the Reformation each arrived at the theory of State Absolutism, and that the Reformation was instrumental in establishing that conception in most European States.

In modern times Treitschke, one of the strongest exponents of State authority, has added his voice to the general testimony, stating explicitly that in his judgment Machiavelli and Luther were the great champions of the 'indefeasible rights of the State.' It was to be expected, therefore, that the principle of State Absolutism would enter England with the Reformation, and so swiftly did this new theory mount to the head of the reigning king—Henry VIII.—that within ten years it made of him an absolute despot. But although State Absolutism grew rapidly in the reign of Henry VIII., it had to wait for the reign of Elizabeth before it could attain full growth; for then modern England, in whose eyes treason is the unpardonable crime, was born, and Elizabeth—the haughty embodiment of that new order—required her subjects to hold almost as an article of faith that the rights of rulers were divine and inalienable.

As early as 1539 an England very different from the careless irresponsible England of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and Englishmen of a different breed to the haughty and generous Normans, began to take shape before the eyes of

the Irish. The new English State was much more deliberate, much more tenacious, than the old in its Irish policy. The servants of this new State in Ireland were men of set purpose and grim methods—men who laboured not to govern Ireland, but to conquer it in the English interest. In every direction English policy became more systematic, and in Ireland military operations on a large scale and standing armies on modern lines began to be put in use. Of these Englishmen and their methods volumes could be written, but happily for our purpose Mr. W. B. Yeats has looked on Elizabethan times with the eyes of genius, and in his essay on Edmund Spenser has given so splendid a description of the change which came over Englishmen in their own country and in Ireland after the Reformation, that we cannot do better than quote a few sentences from it.

Norman England, he writes, was passing away, and in its place was rising the new Anglo-Saxon nation. 'It had been coming for a long time, for it had made the Lollards, and when Anglo-French Chaucer was at Westminster its poet, Langland, sang the office of St. Paul's. Shakespeare, with his delight in great persons, with his indifference to the State, with his scorn of the crowd, with his feudal passion, was of the old nation, and Spenser, though a joyless earnestness had cast shadows upon him, was of the old nation too.' In his beautiful prose Mr. Yeats goes on to explain how, although Spenser was poetically of 'the demonstrative merry England that was about to pass away,' he was politically a man of the new nation.

‘When Spenser wrote of England,’ says Mr. Yeats, ‘he wrote as an official and out of thoughts and emotions that had been organised by the State.’ In his political relations with Ireland Spenser personifies the attitude of England as a whole, and this attitude he has deliberately and powerfully set forth in his book, *The State of Ireland*. The policy which Spenser expounded in that book was indeed the policy of all England, and in matchless words Mr. Yeats sums it up: ‘Nor did he (Spenser) ever understand the people he lived among or the historical events that were changing all things about him. Lord Grey de Wilton had been recalled almost immediately, but it was his policy, brought over ready-made in his ship, that Spenser advocated throughout all his life, equally in his long prose book, *The State of Ireland*, as in the *Faerie Queene*, where Lord Grey was Artigall and the iron man the soldiers and executioners by whose hands he worked. Like a hysterical patient he drew a complicated web of inhuman logic out of the bowels of an insufficient premise—there was no right, no law, but that of Elizabeth, and all that opposed her opposed themselves to God, to civilisation, and to all inherited wisdom and courtesy, and should be put to death.’ A more vivid description of English policy in Ireland it would be difficult to find, and the inevitable deduction of such a policy was that Ireland should in all things subserve English interests.

The policy of all English politicians towards Ireland was henceforth to be as clear and settled

as a proposition in Euclid. Ireland, by reason of its geographical position, constituted a danger to the security of England, and therefore Ireland must be kept permanently impotent. State Absolutism had produced its necessary fruit—the *raison d'état*, or, as they say nowadays, strategic reasons, which in the case of Ireland are used to justify the English military occupation. An Elizabethan statesman was the first to give this policy pointed expression. 'Ireland,' he said, 'hath very good timber and convenient havens, and if the Spaniard might be master of them, he would in a short space be master of the seas, which is our chiefest force.' Some years later Sir William Drury wrote of the Irish: 'I judge them rather enemies than subjects'; later still Spenser, who, like all men of genius, had the faculty of expressing the general thought, set forth in his *State of Ireland* the same policy. 'There should be four great garrisons, and these four garrisons issuing forth, at such convenient times as they shall have intelligence or espial upon the enemy will so drive him from one side to another and tennis him amongst them, that he shall find nowhere safe to keep his creete, or hide himself, but flying from the fire shall fall into the water, and out of one danger into another, that in short space his creete, which is his most sustenance, shall be wasted in preying, or killed in driving, or starved for want of pasture in the woods, and he himself brought so low, that he shall have no heart nor ability to endure his wretchedness, the which will surely come to pass in very short space,

for one winters well following of him will so pluck him on his knees that he will never be able to stand up again.' He is convinced that if this policy were pursued the people of Ireland would soon 'consume themselves and devour one another.' In these three statements the policy which has governed English relations with Ireland from Tudor times to the present day is incisively expressed, and may be summarised in the following propositions which constitute and have constituted since the sixteenth century English policy in Ireland:

1. That the security of England renders necessary the conquest of Ireland.
2. That the only way to keep the Irish permanently impotent is to exterminate them.

New men and new methods were, therefore, to operate in the war which England commenced to wage on the Irish nation in the sixteenth century. They were far more formidable than the Normans, because they had neither their generosity nor their thirst for a rich, magnificent, individual life, and, unlike the Normans, who had not owned absolute allegiance to any State, with the new English invaders the State had replaced the Church, and so they saw Ireland with different eyes, and had, what the Normans had not, a definite objective—the conquest of Ireland, and a method of warfare that was nakedly barbarian.

Mr. W. B. Yeats thinks that for a long time the Irish did not fully understand the character of this 'last struggle of the old Celtic order with England.'

They failed to understand, he says, 'that new invaders were among them, who fought for an alien state, an alien religion.' Not till the coming of Cromwell, to his mind, did the Irish become conscious of their great danger. 'I doubt if anybody in Ireland could have understood as yet that the Anglo-Saxon nation was beginning to persecute in the service of ideas they believed to be the foundation of the State. I doubt if anybody saw that with certainty, till the great Demagogue had come and turned the old house of the noble into the house of the poor, the lonely house, the accursed house of Cromwell.' We certainly agree with Mr. Yeats that, owing to the nature of their civilisation, the Irish were slow to perceive what formidable enemies were in their midst, but we cannot bring ourselves to believe that they remained without understanding down to the middle of the seventeenth century. They had come to understand the nature of that struggle with England certainly before Cromwell's time and probably long before Red Hugh, the greatest soldier of his race, arose to champion the Gael. The reason for this political diffidence was that the Irish had for centuries been schooled in a highly social, brilliant, intense civilisation, which was, however, lacking in the Roman form of political organisation. They had never needed and so had not developed the elaborate political system of Latin Europe, and consequently when they found themselves opposed to a State, like the English, organised in the Latin way, and, therefore, organised mainly for military purposes

—centuries of training—the absence of certain political instincts—the very bent of Irish civilisation, retarded the Irish effort to create an efficient military machine.

It is not to be implied that the Irish of the sixteenth century, because they had not the Roman instinct for political organisation, lacked national consciousness; indeed in few European countries was there a national consciousness more noble, more powerful than there was in Ireland, where the people were bound together by an immense tradition, ‘by great imaginative possessions,’ which aroused a sense of national unity so strong and so intimate that already the Gaelic poets were putting Ireland into their poems as a woman—above all others in beauty and sorrow.

When exactly the Irish commenced to perceive that the nation was in imminent peril from the new invaders it is not easy to say, for there is seldom a clear dividing line between two states in a nation’s mind; but certainly during the first twenty years of the sixteenth century the Irish continued to keep the old easy road, hardly dreaming as yet that they were near a change for the worse in their struggle with England, which they maintained in their own ineffectual but valorous way—each chieftain fighting for his own hand, and occasionally, if his danger was very great, calling to his assistance the rest of his kith and kindred.

In the year 1520, however, Henry resolved to attempt a complete conquest of Ireland, and thenceforward Tudor methods increased in effi-

ciency at such a rate that the Irish chieftains began to get alarmed for their safety, and by the year 1540 they saw clearly, perhaps for the first time, that individually or in clans they were no match for the superior organisation of England, and that, therefore, if they would conquer they must combine. In 1539 - 40 a general movement was organised throughout Ireland on behalf of young Gerald FitzGerald, who was then the chief enemy of England, and many times from 1540 to 1553 the chieftains of North, East, South, and West confederated against the English.

One of the first of the Irish chieftains to apprehend the existence of a new English policy, and to understand the necessity for common action against England, was James, Earl of Desmond, who was in alliance with France in 1523 and with Austria in 1529, and who held, in common with the wisest and most patriotic Irishmen of the century, that the Irish could not overthrow English power of their own strength, and that to effect national unity as well as to create an effective military machine it would be necessary to have foreign assistance. From the sixteenth to the nineteenth century this conception of Irish policy remained in force, and not till the twentieth century have the Irish felt strong enough to rely entirely on their own resources.

It is only natural, therefore, that the first fifty years of the sixteenth century is filled with negotiations between Irish chieftains and Continental princes. Again and again during those years the Irish appealed for military assistance to

France, Scotland, and the Empire, and we find Irishmen moving through the great events of the century as easily as if they had been brought up in the Italian or French schools of politics. The relations of Irishmen with the Continent during those years centre for the most part about France, largely, no doubt, because France and England were national enemies—an English proverb said that only when the Ethiopian became white would Frenchmen love Englishmen—in some degree it may be because the French, famous for their generous chivalry in all ages, were desirous to liberate their Gaelic sister nationality. Every year the negotiations of the Irish with France increased in number and importance, and, although they produced no permanent military benefits for the Irish nation, yet they have a profound significance—for they register the rising temper of the nation, the hardening of the national will against the enemy.

CHAPTER I

IRELAND AND LOUIS XII

THERE seems to be a general disposition amongst Irishmen to take it for granted that the connection of Ireland with Continental countries, in so far as it was of any importance, excepting, perhaps, certain commercial and political relations with Spain, commenced with St. Ruth and the flight of the Wild Geese to Continental battlefields. Year after year the materials for Irish history have increased, a vast number of authorities, printed and in manuscript, have become available to the historical student, and in the light of modern research there can no longer be any doubt that Ireland maintained a close commercial and political intercourse with the Continent from the monastic period down to comparatively recent times. The assumption, so much in evidence in English quarters, that Ireland had for ages been sulking in savage isolation is clearly no longer tenable, and ought therefore finally to be attacked and driven off the field.

That all through the sixteenth century the Irish maintained a flourishing commercial intercourse with France and Spain, in the light of Mrs. Green's notable work, *The Making of Ireland and its Undoing*, can no longer be seriously controverted.

It is now a well-established fact that French and Spanish merchants carried on an extensive trade with Waterford, Limerick, and Galway. Irish ships were to be seen on all the trade routes, and were serious competitors in the field of commercial enterprise. So well known were Irish merchants in the sea-coast towns of France that those inns to which they habitually resorted were called 'The Irishmen's hostelries.' But as the century advanced, everywhere Irish commerce was confronted with dangerous rivals. England developed a genius for piracy, and when such masterly freebooters as Stukeley, Drake, and Frobisher, secretly encouraged by Elizabeth, began to sweep the seas, Irish commerce sustained a staggering blow from which it never rallied. Deliberate repression of Irish trade on the part of the English Government did the rest, and by the opening of the seventeenth century the commercial activities of Ireland were a thing of the past. Indirectly there resulted from this commercial connection with France also a political relationship which ripened steadily through the century. Common hatred of England drew the ties between Ireland and France closer still. Young Irishmen visited France to complete their education and to take refuge from the hostility which they had aroused in English governors by daring to work for the liberation of their country. Frenchmen as well came to Ireland, some as traders, others to see the sights of so remote a country, and a few on pilgrimages. No doubt the name of Ireland still continued to be associated on the Continent with St. Patrick

and the missionary enthusiasm of her great saints and scholars.

In 1516 ¹ a remarkable French pilgrim made his appearance in Ireland. At this moment Europe was trembling on the verge of the Reformation; just a year later Martin Luther nailed his challenge to the Papacy on the church door of Wittenberg, and war was waged on penances, indulgences, and pilgrimages, as the superstitious stock-in-trade of the degenerate successors of Peter. But the violent indictment of Luther had not yet troubled the simple faith of this nameless French knight who visited St. Patrick's Purgatory in the year 1516. At this time the O'Donnells and O'Neills were engaged in a deadly feud, and Hugh Oge O'Donnell, son of Hugh Ruad—the chieftain of Tyrconnel—was carrying the war into the enemy's camp. In the course of one of his excursions he encountered the French knight and they fell into conversation. O'Donnell was a travelled man, probably could speak French, and so he and the knight struck up a friendship. O'Donnell waxed communicative, and informed the Frenchman that he was besieging the castle of Sligo which was in the hands of his enemies—the O'Connors. The siege had been fruitless, and when the Frenchman heard this he promised to equip a vessel in France, capable of carrying heavy guns, which he would despatch in all haste to press home the siege. Until the reign of Henry VIII. the galley was the standard vessel in naval warfare. The galley was more of a transport vessel than a fight-

¹ *The Four Masters*, 1516.

ing machine, carrying few guns, and these could only be discharged from the bows or straight ahead, but at the same time this vessel was packed tight with men. The object of the galley was to ram the enemy so that he could be easily boarded. It was really rather land-fighting than sea-fighting as we understand it to-day. But the ship which in due course sailed into Killybegs harbour to assist O'Donnell seems to have been built on a more modern pattern. From its services we can infer that it could fire broadsides and probably fire under sail. We may consider it extremely likely that it was the first of its kind seen in action off Ireland. Encouraged by this formidable ally, O'Donnell set out to attack his enemies. Sligo was bombarded from the sea, while O'Donnell attacked by land. After a stiff fight the castle surrendered, and O'Donnell, irresistible by reason of his artillery, captured in the course of his victorious career the castles of Coolooney, Castledargan, and Doonamurray (Co. Sligo).¹ Flushed with triumph the conquerors then turned for home, and though we hear no more about O'Donnell's allies, we presume that, having partaken of his hospitality, they set sail for France. The next year another distinguished foreigner—no other than Francesco Chiericato, the apostolic nuncio at Henry VIII.'s court—came to visit St. Patrick's Purgatory.² In medieval times the fame of this holy place had spread throughout Christendom, and had fed the imagination of the greatest of

¹ *The Four Masters*, 1516.

² *Venetian State Papers*, 1509-19, p. 401.

Florentines—Dante. It was still considered one of the sacred places of the earth, and Chieregato, writing to the Marchioness of Mantua, on 10th July 1517, tells her as a piece of news, 'I am going to Ireland to see St. Patrick's Purgatory and all the other wonderful things which are said and written about that island.'¹

But if an occasional Frenchman visited Ireland in quest of fortune or adventure, the exodus of Irish to Continental countries, forced into exile by political necessity or infected with the wandering spirit of the age, was on a much larger scale. Sometimes Irishmen went abroad to push their private fortunes or to pursue their studies in the great Universities, sometimes they came on political missions, and in France both classes were treated with equal generosity. The circumstances of the age and country offered an adequate field for their energies. The sixteenth century was an age of rapid transition for France, the work of monarchical centralisation begun by St. Louis and carried on so drastically by that crafty genius, Louis XI., was approaching completion, but much still remained to be done, and the finishing touches fell to the lot of the kings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. All the sixteenth century, therefore, rings with the steady hammering of Francis I., Henry II., Charles IX., and Henry IV. as they hammered the complex of feudal and modern forces into a unified state.

Since the reign of Louis XI. there had been a growing tendency amongst rulers to substitute a

¹ *Venetian State Papers*, 1509-19, p. 401.

mercenary army for the gallant but less tractable natives. The merchants were growing in number and prosperity, and were easily persuaded to pay for the upkeep of the army, provided that they themselves were spared the hardships of military service. By this system the Crown gained absolute control of the military forces. The Irish were at daggers-drawn with England—then the hereditary enemy of the French—and thus in common with the Scots their fidelity was proof against English bribery. On the other hand, the French monarchs were careful not to expose the loyalty of their Scottish and Irish legionaries to overmuch temptation. They were well paid, and on the whole seem to have been thoroughly satisfied with their position. For the most part the Irish were drafted into Scottish regiments.¹ Ireland, like Scotland, being a country with a superabundant population, was a splendid recruiting ground for the foreign legionaries of France. Hundreds of the Irish military caste, who, in virtue of their noble birth, considered it a dishonour to do any manual labour, moved about the country—fighting, duelling, gambling—and whenever they could leaped at the opportunity of going abroad either to France or Spain, to make for themselves a military career.

Every one knows how Louis XI. shut himself up in the castle of Plessis, tortured with the fear of assassination, and surrounded by day and night with his Scottish bodyguard. One of the most trusted of his officers was an Irishman called

¹ Teulet, *Papiers d'État inédits relatifs à l'Histoire de l'Écosse*.

Daniel MacNeill, a lieutenant in the Scottish Archers.¹ Louis XI., in pursuance of his cruel but effective policy, conceived the idea of marrying his daughter Joan to Louis, Duke of Orleans, so that the branch of Orleans, which was in dangerous proximity to the throne, might be extinguished. This was inevitable because Joan was so deformed as to preclude her from hopes of issue. Louis of Orleans ultimately succeeded to the throne of France, and in the proceedings which led to his divorce from Joan we find that this young Irishman, Daniel MacNeill, had been entrusted with important missions in the lifetime of Louis XI.²

¹ *Procédures politiques du Règne de Louis XII.*, p. 1007, etc. (chronique de Jean de Troyes).

² Louis XII., on his accession, set about obtaining a divorce from his saintly and unfortunate wife Joan. Louis XI., who had forced the match on the unhappy pair, brutally avowed its object, 'that they may have no children to rear, and France no vermin to extirpate.' But when Louis of Orleans became Louis XII., King of France, such a consummation was no longer to be desired, and the want of a male heir rendered a divorce necessary. A searching inquiry was instituted into the circumstances which accompanied the marriage, and the most intimate details in the daily lives of the royal couple were dragged before the public gaze. During the reign of Louis XI. Louis of Orleans had been the most dangerous and desperate of malcontents. He had fathered several plots, and Louis XI. was compelled to keep him under constant surveillance. For this task he selected the young Irishman Daniel MacNeill, who discharged his duties with such ability that Louis promoted him to a captainship in the Archers. He was in constant attendance on the King's person, and occupied a place which in former times was filled only by a nobleman of the highest rank. But Louis XI. was one of the new kings who surrounded the throne with able and industrious men from all classes. His chief adviser was his barber Oliver, '*le daim*,' and his most active executive officer was Tristan l'Hermite, the provost-marshal. What Louis demanded from his officers was absolute and implicit obedience combined with sound

On 1st January 1515 Louis XII. died, and the crown passed to his nephew Francis, Duke of Angoulême, a youth of twenty years, whose thirst for glory impelled him to attempt the conquest of Italy and made him a centre of attraction for adventurers from all countries. Too numerous to mention are those Irishmen who found their way into his armies. Seen on the canvas of Paul Veronese, the face of Francis I. is anything but prepossessing—the narrow, crafty eyes, the large cheeks, the coarse and heavy expression are hardly indicative of generosity, and it is to be feared that the Irish had no reason to praise the munificence of their royal commander. One consequence, at all events, of their presence in French armies was that Francis I. became conscious of the existence of Ireland in the economy of Europe, and, subsequent to certain developments in European affairs, attempted to utilise Ireland as a political weapon.

abilities. Daniel MacNeill must have possessed the requisite qualities, for, in this foreign country, and among a strange people, he rose to fame and fortune. *Procédures politiques du Règne de Louis XII.*, pp. 1007, 1030, 1032, 1081, etc.; Raynal, *Histoire du Berry*, t. iii. p. 163.

CHAPTER II

THE EARL OF DESMOND, FRANCE, AND AUSTRIA

WITH the reign of Henry VIII. a new chapter opens in the history of England and Ireland. Those who were acquainted with the proud and self-willed character of Henry VIII. foretold at an early date that he would not be contented with the Fabian tactics of his father, but that rather he would pursue a bold and aggressive policy. Providence smiled on England the day that Wolsey was given the task of guiding the first steps of Henry VIII. For this robust and opulent political genius was just the man to restore order, to consolidate the monarchy, and to inspire the nation with some portion of his own superb self-confidence. Wolsey was the masterful embodiment of the new England—direct, imperious, not yet troubled with the vague unrest of the Renaissance. His type has profoundly influenced English history—indeed, when his name passed into legend, his character still survived as the standard Englishman. In modern times it has been vulgarised in the national type, John Bull. Both Henry and Wolsey were men of decision, and in 1520 they set their hands to the task of completing the conquest of Ireland.

Whatever may have been the speculations of

Henry VIII. and Wolsey on the unexpected turn which the Norman invasion had taken, they were quick to draw the conclusion that Ireland could only be finally subdued by the sword. To us, in the perspective of history, force seems to have helped in welding the Irish nation into a firmer unity, and thus by a wise dispensation the edge of the sword has turned against its champion. We wonder that England could waste such quantities of blood and treasure on the impossible, and we are wondering still. No doubt, Henry VIII. considered the advantages of a policy of peaceful penetration by means of compact English settlement, but in his selection of Surrey, a soldier with a grim reputation, for the task of governing Ireland he showed his determination to reduce Ireland to obedience by the sword. Surrey came over to Ireland full of confidence. His reports to Henry emphasised the facts that seldom was the hold of England so weak as at present ; that so long as the great families remained hostile to England Ireland was but a sleeping volcano ; and that the English Pale was little more than a stretch of coast from Dublin to Dundalk, exposed to the ceaseless raids of the native Irish. The great families, therefore, to Surrey's mind, were the root of the trouble, and he decided to extirpate them. He attacked the O'Connors and Desmond, but his efforts only succeeded in giving these nobles a foretaste of what they had to expect if English power grew stronger. Like all English governors in Ireland, Surrey promised great things and achieved practically nothing. External events

soon compelled his withdrawal and the suspension of the policy of force. When Surrey departed, the Irish nobles, who had caught in this soldier governor a glimpse of Carew and Mountjoy, laid aside their private and provincial jealousies to unite in a common effort to throw off the English yoke. Their efforts in large measure depended on general European politics, and so we must take a brief survey of the general situation.

In 1520 Francis I. and Henry VIII. had pledged their friendship upon the Field of the Cloth of Gold, but professions which required such a dazzling and costly garment could scarcely be sincere, and within a few weeks Henry VIII. had entered into an alliance with the Emperor Charles V. against his sworn brother, Francis I. But princes have seldom been so foolish as to put their trust in princes, and in this case, although Henry protested that Charles had made proposals for an English marriage and an invasion of France, and that he had dissuaded him from war, Francis I. did not believe him. He proceeded to pay Henry back in his own coin by inciting the enemies of the Empire in Sedan and of England in Ireland and Scotland to revolt. Wolsey was anxious for many reasons to postpone the conflict with France—he realised that on the outbreak of war the Scottish would pour across the English borders and that the vigorous policy which Surrey was pursuing in Ireland would have to be abandoned. But circumstances soon left him no choice in the matter, and from Calais he wrote and advised the King to appoint an Irish deputy, who, unlike

Surrey, would make no demands upon the home exchequer, and this was done. In 1522 Surrey, who committed the first acts of war against France, sacked Morlaix in July, and in August applied to the Boulonnais and Artois the cruel species of warfare which he had perfected in Ireland.

This war between England and France was destined to have important consequences for Ireland. We have already mentioned that on account of the Irish in French armies Ireland passed into the ken of Francis I., and in the course of the present war the following events determined him to utilise Irish aspirations towards independence.

While Wolsey was endeavouring to destroy French influence in Scotland, and while a league was being formed comprising several Italian States for the purpose of expelling the French from Italy, Charles and Henry actually plotted a partition of France. In this project they were encouraged by the fact that Charles, Duke of Bourbon, one of the first nobles in the French kingdom, was burning to revenge the insults which he had recently suffered at the hands of Francis I.¹ During September 1522 English agents worked upon the outraged feelings of this prince, and it was finally decided that, as soon as Francis should have crossed the Alps, English and Imperialist armies would cross the frontier, while

¹ *Négotiations entre la France et l'Autriche*, M. Le Glay, vol. ii. pp. 593-5. De Thou, *Historia sui Temporis*, p. 47. Lavissee, *Histoire de France*, t. v. part II. p. 29.

Bourbon should rise in revolt in the south of France. When the victory was won, France was to be chopped up and divided among the victors. The cold-blooded assurance of this dismemberment of a great nation may be judged from the fact that it was agreed that the crown of France and the old English possessions should fall to the lot of Henry. At Lyons on his way to Italy Francis I. discovered that Bourbon was a traitor and that his kingdom was threatened by a vast secret conspiracy. He remained in France to deal with the situation, and when he had ascertained the full extent of English treachery, his feelings were roused to a pitch of frenzy. In this receptive frame of mind the Irish found Francis I. when they opened negotiations with him in the year 1523.

The Earl of Desmond was the prime mover in Ireland. Alike by reason of his connections, his wealth, and his ability, Desmond was one of the most powerful noblemen in the kingdom. He had relatives in the French army, and was probably well instructed as to the temper of Francis I. in 1523. His chief agent was Antony Daly—an Irishman of noble birth.¹ A life of stirring incident, plots, and escapes had made this man wary and resourceful. He had been concerned in almost all the chief transactions of Desmond's career, and now, when he arrived at the court of Francis I., he gave proof of high diplomatic ability. At all events Francis I.'s hatred of England made

¹ *Documents from Simancas relating to Reign of Elizabeth*, 1558-68, ed. by S. Hall.

him a ready listener to the complaints and requests of the Irish, and, although nothing was finally settled, Francis promised to send two plenipotentiaries to Ireland to meet Desmond and arrange the terms of a Franco-Irish alliance.¹ The situation in Ireland was full of promise. The Earl of Kildare, whose influence both in England and Ireland was great, had secretly co-operated with Desmond in his campaign against England, and had warmly approved of the overtures to France. Kildare's audacity and assurance had already stood him in good stead, and on this occasion also served to disarm English suspicions. But news of the most definite nature soon reached London, and Kildare, as the Lord-Deputy, was ordered to secure the person of the Earl of Desmond. While Kildare pretended to track down the Earl, in reality he entered into closer relations with him, and together they concerted a common plan of action. Kildare brought other Irish chieftains into the conspiracy by marriage alliances. One of his daughters became the wife of O'Connor, Chief of Offaly, who had been the inveterate enemy of English authority all his lifetime, another daughter married O'Carroll, and a third the Baron of Slane. Kildare's next move was to transfer the artillery and military stores from Dublin Castle to his own castle at Maynooth, which, in the eyes of Irishmen, was tantamount to a declaration that he had abandoned England with all her works and pomps,

¹ *Pièces et Documents inédits relatifs à l'Histoire de l'Écosse*, 32 n. *Mémoires de Dubellay*, 1522-23, liv. ii.

and was regarded with such misgivings by the English in Ireland that Ormonde, one of the English party, informed the authorities in London of what was occurring.¹ But there they had eyes and ears for nothing but the French War, and so the conspiracy in Ireland continued to grow apace.

Two French ambassadors—the Comte de Condalle, Lord of Oisy, and Francis de Bergagni—arrived in Ireland in June (1523) and met the Earl of Desmond at Askeaton. They put their heads together and planned a vast conspiracy by which Desmond was to be assisted to free Ireland and in return was to join in a campaign to dethrone Henry VIII. and set up in his stead Richard de la Pole.² This is the vaguest outline of the treaty, and, as fortunately its precise terms are still preserved in a paper in the British Museum, we shall enter fully into its details. This document states that in June 1523 Francis I. made a treaty with James (Desmond) ‘a prince of Ireland,’ by which the Earl contracted to make war in person, and at his own expense, against Henry VIII. as soon as a French expeditionary force should set foot in Ireland. He promised to bring into the field 10,000 foot and 400 horse, and if needs be would contribute further contingents of infantry to the common cause. Irish horses were highly prized in those days, and Desmond engaged to furnish teams for the draft

¹ Stanihurst. Ware. *Butler to his Father*, Dec. 1527. Froude, vol. ii. p. 281.

² *Irish State Papers*, 1509-73, p. 7 (26th June 1528). *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. ii. (Ireland), p. 198.

artillery.¹ This was Desmond's side of the bargain. The objects of the war were to expel the English from Ireland, and to place the Duke of Suffolk, Richard de la Pole, on the throne of England. Twice in the reign of Henry VII. had the English throne been perilously shaken by the plots of pretenders. In both cases the claimants had been rank impostors of low origin. Withal, only by consummate coolness and moderation had Henry VII. succeeded in averting disaster. His methods had been secret, crafty, and dishonour-

¹ 'Le Recueil des Rois de France,' *Titus B.*, xi. leaf 352. Sieur de Tillet, British Museum. *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. ii. (Ireland), p. 198.

A rough draft of this treaty between France and the Earl of Desmond is to be found in the English archives. Its terms are as follows :

'Convention between Francis I. and James Earl of Desmond (Decymoniae), made by Francis Bastard (Notus) of Decondalle, lord of Oisy, and Francis de Bergagni. The Earl agrees to commence war upon the King of England on condition that Francis makes no agreement with England unless the Earl, Theodoric O'Brien and his nephews be comprehended in it. If they are attacked by England, Francis is to defend them.

'1. Francis, by sending two ships, shall punish as contumacious such of the Earl's subjects as refuse the payment of the Earl's dues.

'2. He shall give a pension to the Earl, and to David MacMorris, his master of the war (*senescallo guerrarum*). In return for these things the Earl shall (1) levy war on the King of England, whilst the French army approaches the shores of Ireland, with the view of driving Henry VIII. entirely out of Ireland, and restoring the Duke of Suffolk (De la Pole). Arrangements for the lands recovered. (2) The Earl is to furnish 400 horse and 10,000 foot, to remain under his command. If he furnishes 15,000 foot, the king is to provide for all men duly armed two angelots of gold, and for the kerns having a sword and lance one angelot ; "*pro singulo trimestri et singulis tribus mensibus.*"

'3. The Earl shall use his diligence to furnish the necessary horses for the artillery of the Irish king and the Duke of Suffolk. Attested by the French commissioners, at St. Germain-en-Laye, 4th March 1524. Sealed by the Earl at his castle of Askeaton, 20th June 1523.'

able, and yet it was only by a narrow margin that he had escaped dethronement and England the horror of renewed civil war. Henry VIII., on the other hand, was hot-headed and apt to act rashly under the influence of any great excitement. Then De la Pole was much the strongest candidate that had yet challenged the throne. There was royal blood in his veins, and he was popular with those men, still scattered all over England, who looked forward to the day when the White Rose would bloom again. De la Pole had led a varied career. He had been born and bred in an atmosphere where conspiracy was routine. He had been pensioned by Louis XII. and recognised as King of England, escaped into France, led a wandering life in Hungary. He had commanded German troops in Navarre and been comrade in arms to the Chevalier Bayard. On two occasions he had been within an ace of invading England, and now the Irish and French put him forward as a rival to Henry VIII. with the reflection that at worst he would certainly cause a renewal of civil war.¹ While England, therefore, was stewing in her own juice, the French would seize the English possessions in France, the Scots under the Duke of Albany would invade England, and the Irish recover their long-lost liberties. Such were the objects and the anticipations of those who arranged the Franco-Irish alliance. Francis I., on his side, contracted that he would make no peace or truce with

¹ Ellis, *Original Letters*, p. 208, etc. *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vols. ii., iii., etc.

England that did not comprehend Desmond, Turlough O'Brien, and his nephew, and that if Henry should wage war on them, in contravention of peace terms, he would come to their assistance with ships, armed men, and artillery. In addition, provided that the Irish forces on a war footing reached the number of 15,000, the French agreed to pay them at the rate of two angelots a month for every fully-armed man, and one angelot for every kern. The Earl of Desmond himself was to receive a suitable pension for life, and his seneschal David MacMorris a similar gratuity of 500 livres. The French were to occupy three ports—Cork, Kinsale, and Youghal—as a security for their assistance in men, money, and munitions. This was the substance of the treaty between Desmond and Francis I.¹ The ambassadors returned to France, probably accompanied by Antony Daly as Desmond's representative, and the treaty was solemnly ratified by Francis I. at St. Germain-en-Laye. The original act of the treaty still lies in the 'Chambre des Comptes' in Paris, wherein Desmond is styled 'James, Earl of Munster and Prince of Ireland.'² The Irish had

¹ 'Le Recueil des Rois de France.' Sieur de Tillet, British Museum. *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. ii. (Ireland), p. 198. Brewer, vol. iii. No. 3118.

² *History of Ireland*, L'Abbé Geoghegan, p. 389. The Abbé Geoghegan gives the following account of the Desmond conspiracy: 'The Emperor Charles v. and Henry VIII., King of England, having entered into a league against Francis I., resolved to attack him on all sides. To defend himself, Francis made all the alliances he could against them. The Duke of Albany was sent to Scotland to create a diversion in that quarter, and being aware, too, that the Irish had long and reluctantly borne the dominion of the

every reason to be satisfied with the results of the negotiation. The wisest heads knew that England could not be beaten without foreign co-operation. A powerful ally had been gained, and while England was fighting on the Continent they would break the yoke.

Preparations were pushed on rapidly, hope and resolution mounted fast and high, and before the year 1523 had closed it was thought that Ireland would be a free nation. On the Continent events developed rapidly. De la Pole was straining

English, and that they had supported a vigorous and just warfare against them, Francis proposed a treaty of alliance with some of their chiefs. James FitzGerald, Earl of Desmond, was then a powerful lord in Munster. From the situation of his estates in the south of the island, he was more contiguous to France than the others, and although a natural subject of the King of England, either through an ambition of reigning or a spirit of revenge for the death of his ancestor who had been unjustly beheaded at Drogheda, he was the first to express his dissatisfaction towards the English government,' etc.

Ware, in his *Annals of Reign of Henry VIII.*, substantially corroborates the other accounts of the Desmond conspiracy: 'About the same time,' writes Ware (or, as others have it, in the year 1523), 'James Earl of Desmond was discovered to plot new designs. He was one that bore a great sway in Munster, and wealthy besides, but not content with this, he by his letters and messenger Anthony Daly, earnestly implored Francis King of France (then an enemy and in war against our Henry) to send him auxiliary forces into Ireland, thereby to subject it to himself. Although soon after a peace was concluded between both kings, but without success. About the same time the King sent letters to Kildare, commanding him to apprehend Desmond, being charged with high treason. He, drawing his forces together, went for Munster. But Desmond always declined the fight, being (as it was thought) privily advertised thereof by the Earl of Kildare, whereupon nothing of consequence was then done. We may not here omit a wonderful privilege which the Earls of Desmond assumed to themselves in those days, viz.: to absent themselves from Parliaments and walled towns according to their pleasure.' (Ware, *Annals of Ireland*, p. 50.)

every nerve to raise an army sufficient for the invasion of England and was meeting with every encouragement from the French king. In England they were preparing feverishly for the war with France. Henry, inflamed with martial ambitions, interested himself in every detail of public business, but it was on the shoulders of Wolsey that the main burden of organising the army devolved. Wolsey's schemes ramified throughout Europe. He sent Richard Pace on an embassy to the Swiss Confederation to procure aid for an invasion of Languedoc, he tried to bring Venice into the league against France, and in view of the fact that the Duke of Albany was timed to appear in Scotland at any moment, he opened a campaign against the Scots which varied from open warfare to kidnapping and secret murder.¹ Surrey, now a practised hand at ravaging, executed several raids on the border, and by the month of September so thoroughly had he done his work that, in Wolsey's own words, there was left 'neither house, fortress, village, tree, cattle, corn, or other succour of man.' But these measures did not prevent the Duke of Albany, who had been entrusted by the French confederacy with the Scottish invasion of England, from landing at Dumbarton on 25th September with a strong auxiliary force and a train of artillery. The fiery cross ran through the land, and the Scots flocked to Albany's standard to fight against the national enemy. With these

¹ *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. 3320-40, etc. *Baker's Chronicle of the Kings of England*, vol. i. p. 271.

reinforcements Albany marched down to the Tweed, and from the nether bank of the river bombarded the castle of Wark. But the garrison fought stubbornly, maintaining themselves long enough to give Surrey time to come up. When Albany heard that an immense English army, under Surrey, was within a few hours' march, he set spurs to his horse and rode away from the battle. Left without a leader, the Scottish army hastily scattered. On 20th May 1525 Albany sailed away to France, and the Scottish invasion of England, upon which the Franco-Irish confederacy had built high hopes, was seen to have irretrievably failed.

Richard de la Pole had not been more fortunate. After strenuous efforts he managed to concentrate an expeditionary force in one of the Hanseatic towns—whence at the critical moment it was to be thrown into England.¹ But transports were lacking, and the Italian expedition which Francis I. was to lead in person into Italy eventually absorbed the best of his captains and the bulk of the soldiery in his little army. In the long run he had to renounce all hope of an immediate invasion of England, and Francis induced him to join in the expedition which purposed to lay the fairest provinces of Italy at the feet of France. When Italy had passed into the possession of France, then they would turn all their forces against England.

Meanwhile Desmond was gathering forces for

¹ Teulet, *Pièces et Documents inédits relatifs à l'Histoire de l'Écosse*, 32 n.

the invasion of England, but the utter collapse of Albany in Scotland and the failure of De la Pole to carry out his part of the engagement gave a check to Irish designs. Desmond continued to organise an expedition, but prudently waited upon events before embarking upon open war.¹

¹ Desmond deferred the invasion for three years, but in the year 1529 he carried out an Irish invasion of England on a comprehensive scale. The year is memorable in English history as the beginning of the breach with the Papacy. English envoys were threatening a general council and a falling off from Rome unless Pope Clement authorised the divorce between Henry and Catherine. Early in the year rumours of the impending divorce had passed from England to Spain, and Charles v. set all the resources of the Empire in motion against it. It is more than probable that Charles, by means of his chaplain Gonzalo Fernandez, who visited Desmond, actually incited him to undertake this invasion of England. Success might mean that Henry would relinquish his purpose of divorcing Catherine in order to deal with the Irish menace. At first Desmond carried all before him. In twelve months he landed an army—estimated in round numbers at 20,000 men—in Pembrokeshire. They spread themselves over the country about Milford Haven and between St. David's and Tenby—easily crushing all attempts at local resistance. Irish ships swarmed along the coasts, and for twelve months the countryside was virtually an Irish possession. But matters of moment required Desmond's presence in Ireland, and, drawing his forces together, he returned in a blaze of glory. (Brewer, vol. iv. Nos. 3372, 4484-5. *Ireland under the Tudors*, vol. i. p. 183.)

Wolsey must have been angered at the Irish invasion, with whose details he was made familiar in a letter from R. Gruffyth, dated 8th July 1538.

‘Twenty thousand Irishmen,’ writes Gruffyth, ‘have come within these twelve months into Pembrokeshire, the lordship of Haverford West, and along the sea to St. David's. They are for the most part rascals out of the dominions of the rebel earl of Desmond, very few from the English pale. The town of Tenby is almost all Irish, rulers and commons, who disobey all the King's processes issuing from the exchequer of Pembroke, supposing their charter warrants them to do so. One of them, named Germyn Gruffith, is owner of two great ships well appointed with ordinance. They will take no English or Welsh

The weakness of the foreign alliance lay in the fact that at any moment Francis I. might find it advantageous to make peace with England, and anybody who watched the events of the day could foretell that a prince would not scruple to throw over his allies at the call of convenience. By treaty Francis I. was bound to assist the Irish, but if circumstances required it the French, like every other people, were certain to shirk their obligations, and, as we will soon see, this was precisely what happened. On the other hand, considering the state of international morality, it is not surprising that France deserted Ireland. At first circumstances prevented the despatch of assistance to the Irish insurgents, and later on the strong voice of necessity bade them make peace with England on any terms they could procure. The Franco-Irish alliance was shattered at the battle of Pavia. Here in the spring of 1525 the Imperialists decisively defeated the French. Some 14,000 of their best troops were slain, and, to crown their misfortunes, the King of France himself was taken. Henry VIII. promptly despatched an embassy to Charles to suggest a joint invasion

into their service. Last year, hearing of a great number of them being landed, the writer made a privy watch, and in two little parishes took above 200, and sent them to sea again. They have since returned with many more, but he has ever since expelled them as before. Throughout the circuit there are four Irishmen to one English or Welsh. Order should be given that no man in these ports retain any Irishmen in his service, otherwise they will increase more and more. The mayor and town of Tenby have committed great riots and unlawful assemblies, with divers extortions, as appears by indictments against them in the records of Pembroke. They have also aided and victualled the King's enemies at different times.' (Brewer, 4485.)

of France with the proposal that Henry would get the French throne and the Empire recover Burgundy. France had to expect scant mercy from such conquerors, and Ireland, therefore, could no longer hope for assistance from a nation that seemed to be at its last gasp. But such large schemes as Henry suggested entailed large supplies, and luckily for France English citizens obstinately refused to loosen their purse-strings. Thus as Charles was unwilling to embark on the invasion of France without substantial subsidies from England, and as Henry could not lay hands on the money, the whole scheme was abandoned. But the French were at the end of their resources and, of necessity, had to make peace with England. Thus had the Franco-Irish alliance ended in smoke. Desmond had staked everything on a turn of the wheel in European politics. He had played for high stakes and he had lost. It was not till Henry had wrung the last concession from French weakness that he seriously turned his attention to Ireland. He would have liked, no doubt, to exterminate the Irish for their incapacity to realise the blessings of English civilisation and their traitorous relations with his foreign enemies. But, as his resources did not admit of such a comprehensive programme, he had recourse to milder methods. Kildare, as the most outstanding culprit, he could not allow to go unpunished. Apart from the fact that he had been plotting with France, Henry considered that Kildare had shamefully neglected his duties as Lord-Deputy. Instead of enlightening the natives to

the glorious privileges of speaking English and dressing in the English fashion, it was to be regretted that Kildare had set them the worst of examples in his own dress and speech. It was reported in 1526 that scarcely a word of English was heard in the county of Kildare, that the inhabitants persisted in their Irish customs, and that, except Dublin and Drogheda, the Pale itself had become Irish. In 1526 Kildare was accused by his old enemy, Sir Piers Butler, of conspiring with Irish enemies to help Desmond in his intrigues with France, and of neglecting to arrest him on special instructions from the King. It was asserted that Kildare had entered Munster ostensibly for the purpose of effecting this arrest, but had already sent Desmond warning and the advice to plead his privileges not to attend Parliament or enter walled towns. In this way Desmond had been enabled to set English authority at defiance. Kildare was called to London to answer these charges, which were serious enough to have brought any other chieftain to the block.¹ But

¹ *Butler to his Father*, 27th December 1327. Brewer, 3698, 3699. Stanihurst. Brewer, vol. iv. No. 1352. Russell, *Kilkenny Archaeological Journal*, 1868-69, p. 369.

Some of the articles alleged by the Earl of Ormonde against Desmond are instructive :

1. ' When the Earl of Ormond, as deputy of Ireland, being informed of a conspiracy by the Earl of Desmond, in league with the French king, to admit Richard de la Pole, with an army, that he might subdue all Ireland, made, at his own expense, an expedition and with great rewards and other persuasions severed Desmond's uncles, cousins, and adherents from taking part with him, and bound all the cities and port towns to their allegiance, that they should not allow Desmond to enter them ; Desmond then invaded and laid waste Ormond's country,

Kildare was no ordinary man ; the more closely one examines his temperament, the more forcibly one must be struck by his immense vitality and the richness and prodigality of his talents. Brought before the Council of England Wolsey opened the attack on Kildare with the declaration, 'I wot well, my Lord, that I am not the meetest man at this board to charge you with these treasons, because it hath pleased some of your pew-fellows to report that I am a professed enemy to all nobility, and namely to the Geraldines, but seeing every curst boy can say as much when he is controlled, and seeing those points are so weighty, that they should not be dissembled of us, I must have leave notwithstanding your stale slander, to be the mouth of those honourable persons at this time, and to trump your treasons in your way, howsoever you take me.' Then the Cardinal denounced in unsparing language the treasonable intercourse of Desmond with France

and when Ormond advanced against him took refuge in the castle of Cahir Donaeshe, in an island in the river Showre, having a bridge on either side of the castle. Ormond then besieged him on the one side of the river, and he escaped by the other. Meanwhile Kildare caused Desmond's uncles and kinsmen, whom the Earl of Ormond had separated from him, to strengthen and assist the said Earl of Desmond, and he continuing in his rebellion, the Earl of Kildare daily hath and doth send his messengers and secret credence to the said Earl of Desmond.'

2. 'The O'Briens, being the strongest Irishmen in Ireland, were at good peace with Ormond, but Kildare sent to their captains divers gifts in the name of wages, as horses, cloth, silks, fustions for jacks, with secret credence by one called the Abbot Onelon, on receipt of which the O'Briens immediately joined Desmond against the Earl of Ormond,' etc. (Brewer, 1352.) There can be hardly any doubt that Kildare was the mainstay of Desmond in his dangerous intrigues with foreign powers.

and the Emperor, saying, 'First, you remember how the lewd Earl your kinsman, who passeth not whom he serve, might he change his master, sent his confederate with letters of credence to Francis the French King, and having but cold comfort there, to Charles the Emperor, proffering the help of Munster and Connaught towards the conquest of Ireland, if either of them would help to win it from our King. How many letters, what precepts, what threats have been sent you to apprehend him, and yet not done. Why so forsooth I could not catch him. Nay, nay, Earl, forsooth you would not nighly watch him. If he be unjustly suspected, why are you partial in so great a charge? If not, why are you fearful to have him tried? Yea, Sir, it will be sworn and deposed to your face that for fear of meeting him, you have winked, wilfully shunned his sight, altered your course, warned his friends, stopped both eyes and ears against his detectors, and when soever you took upon you to hunt him out, then was he sure before-hand to be out of your walk, surely this juggling and false play, little become either an honest man, called to such honour, or a nobleman put in such trust.'

When Wolsey charged him with attempting to make himself King of Ireland, Kildare boldly declared that these accusations did not sound well on the lips of a man who behaved as though he were King of England himself. Then he proceeded, in words that have a sonorous and stately cadence, to silence the redoubtable Cardinal. 'I slumber,' he declared, 'in a hard cabin, when you sleep in

a soft bed of down. I serve under the King his cope of heaven, when you are served under a canopy. I drink water out of my skull, when you drink wine out of golden cups, my courser is trained to the field when your jennet is taught to amble, when you are begraced and belorded, and crouched and kneeled unto, then find I small grace with our Irish borderers, except I cut them off by the knees.' The infuriated Cardinal insisted that although Kildare had gone to the farthest north to reclaim his own, he had never stirred a hand against Desmond who had defied the crown of England. Kildare laughed the idea to scorn. 'Cannot,' he replied, 'the Earl of Desmond shift but I must be of counsel? Cannot he hide him except I wink?' Never before had Wolsey been treated with such contumely. He had been browbeaten in the presence of his council by this humorous plain-spoken Irishman, and he became speechless with rage. Kildare was committed to the Tower pending the arrival of further evidence from Ireland.¹ But Wolsey's revenge could not wait. Without consulting the King or council the Cardinal sent a warrant for the execution of Kildare to the Governor of the Tower, which arrived while that officer was absorbed in a game of shovel-board with his distinguished prisoner. On reading it the Governor betrayed signs of agitation which Kildare immediately diagnosed as perilous to himself. Never for a moment did his quick wit fail him. 'By St. Bride,' he intoned cheerfully, 'there is some

¹ Campion, *History of Ireland*, p. 165. Russell.

mad game in that scroll, but fall how it will this throw is for a huddle.' He persuaded the Governor to go straight to the King and ask his real pleasure. In this dilemma the Governor thought it wiser to take his advice, and repairing to Whitehall, he was at once admitted, though it was after night-fall. The King was amazed and angered at the tale which the Governor told him.¹ Henry had always regarded this unruly Irishman with a certain admiration, and he was horrified to hear what the Cardinal had attempted. Straightway he cancelled the sentence, denouncing Wolsey as a meddlesome, impudent priest. Whatever truth is in this story, at all events Kildare was detained in London as a hostage for the loyalty of his house.

But the Irish, so far from being impressed by this show of severity, determined to force the Government to release their prisoner. The O'Connors, into whose family Kildare had married one of his daughters, and who had been deeply involved in

¹ Stanihurst. Russell, *Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, 1868-69, 10, p. 369. Kildare possessed a fine library of Latin, English, French, and Irish books. Altogether there were about one hundred and ten volumes in the library, of which upwards of ninety were in Latin, English, and French, and the remainder in Irish. Almost all the great classics were included in this collection, which would compare favourably with the finest private collections in England. Kildare was a man of culture, and was well read not only in the ancients but also in current literature. The works of Nicholas de Lyra, More's *Utopia* and *Dialogue on Pilgrimages*, Lorentius Valla, *Poems of Bernard Ardeas*, Vincent de Beauvais, *Triumphs of Petrarch*; translations of Boccaccio and Christina of Pisa, *Answer of Henry VIII. to Luther*, the *Shepherd's Calendar*, and many other choice works found a place in Kildare's library. The Earl, therefore, was in close contact with the main stream of European culture, and not at all the barbarian which some historians try to make out.

the intrigues with France, were the first to take action. In 1528 they were out in rebellion and carrying all before them. They actually captured the Vice-Deputy, which was a sufficient advertisement to England that the country could not be governed without the help of the Geraldines. The O'Connors were a fierce fighting stock. They were perhaps the most determined and resourceful family of the native Irish. Nothing could disarm their hostility to the English—not even the bribes and conciliatory tactics of Henry VIII. They seem to have felt it their duty to allow the English no rest, to harass and ravage them perpetually, which they did throughout this century with a vengeance. On this occasion Henry VIII. thought it desirable to remonstrate with them for the crime of capturing his representative, and a messenger arrived at O'Connor's stronghold with 'a letter from the King.' 'What king?' said the chieftain. 'If I may live one year I trust to see Ireland in that case that there shall be no more mention here of the King of England than of the King of Spain.' This was the national creed in the sixteenth century. England had given the Irish choice between extermination and subjection. But the Irish never regarded the English as other than foreign invaders whom they would eventually drive out of the country.¹

This rebellion of the O'Connors was a sanguinary object lesson which had not been lost on the English, and so in 1529 Kildare was allowed to return to Ireland.

¹ *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. ii. pp. 135, 146, 147. Brewer, 4353.

Meanwhile Desmond, who was the root of all the trouble, continued travelling steadily along the paths of rebellion. With admirable pertinacity, on the failure of France, he searched for a new ally among the European powers then at variance with England, and in the Emperor of Austria he seemed likely to find a new auxiliary. On 22nd May a confederacy had been formed at Cognac between the Pope, France, Florence, Venice, to resist the projects of Charles v.—the Emperor of Austria—and Henry VIII. was styled Protector of this ‘Holy League.’ For England a war upon Charles was out of the question, and although Henry exhorted the league to fight, he had no intention of fighting himself. Nevertheless, had it not been for the intervention of England a general peace might have been obtained. Consequently the Emperor of Austria was sufficiently enraged with England to welcome the overtures which Desmond made to him in the year 1527. Irish agents came to the Imperial court with presents of Irish hawks and wolf-hounds to Charles v. and were magnificently entertained. The gifts were in charge of a messenger who had been foolish enough, on his journey from St. Sebastian to the Imperial court at Toledo, to disclose the nature of his mission. Apparently this agent was unaccustomed to bear such responsibility, for he could not restrain himself from showing his despatches to the Papal collector at Valladolid. The English agents were soon in possession of Desmond’s secret machinations, which they promptly reported to Henry. Desmond’s

principal need was artillery, which he earnestly requested the Emperor to furnish. Charles v. was gracious in his reply and sent a gold cup in token of his friendship to Desmond.¹ His chaplain Gonzalo Fernandez was the agent through which the correspondence was conducted, and in 1529 he arrived in Ireland for the purpose of concluding an alliance if he thought that Desmond's resources were as large as had been represented. He has left an interesting account of his impressions of Ireland, from which, in view of the fact that we are mainly concerned with the French aspect of Irish relations, we give the following extract:² 'Of all men in the world the Earl hates most deeply the Cardinal of York. He told me he had been in alliance with France and had a relation called De Quindel now in the French Army in Italy. In future he said he would have no dealings with the French.' However, like other Continental princes, Charles v. accepted the alliance of the Irish only to indulge in vague promises which he had either no intention or ability to perform. The English authorities, who were fully cognisant of these diplomatic passages, determined to get rid of such a dangerous enemy to their power as Desmond. In June 1528 a Bill for his attainder in the Irish Parliament was prepared. 'Bill for the attainder of James the 11th Earl of Desmond, for treason in receiving and comforting the Comte de Condalle of France,

¹ *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. vii. p. 186. Brewer, vol. iv. No. 4878, 4911, 4948, etc.

² *The Pilgrim*. Froude. (*Vide notes*.)

with other Frenchmen, his associates, within his lordships and manors in Ireland, and for privily sending messages to Francis, the French King at war with Henry VIII.' ¹ But no Parliament was then held, and before the English could visit Desmond with their vengeance he had passed beyond their power by his death in the year 1529.

Desmond seems to have been head and shoulders above his fellow-chieftains. He rose to the conception of an independent Ireland at a time when most of his fellow-countrymen were wrangling over cattle raids or wasting themselves in civil war. He was indefatigable in the pursuit of his policy, and though his tactics were nearly always Fabian it must be remembered that, considering the division of national forces, without foreign help he could not hope to accomplish Irish independence. His force and will power are proved by the fact that no one even dared to try and execute the sentence of the English Government on him. For ten years Ireland and England was full of his name. In any country with normal openings for talent such a man as Desmond would have been bound to come to the front. As it was, he was one of the first in that long line of illustrious Irishmen who, inspired by the vision of a free Ireland, bent their energies with heroic constancy to the expulsion of the invader. It may be objected that undue prominence is given to the work and aspirations of a single man ; that it is by no means justifiable to deduce from the character and policy of a chieftain like Desmond

¹ *State Papers*, 1528 (26th June), p. 7.

the existence of a widespread national movement ; and that, as a matter of fact, while Desmond was attempting to throw off the English yoke the rest of the country was sunk in apathy and indifference. We do not claim that there existed in sixteenth-century Ireland a national movement throbbing with the vital energy of such movements in the twentieth century, but we think there can be no doubt that unconsciously, or perhaps with spells of intense consciousness, there was in sixteenth-century Ireland a definite homogeneous nationalism. Besides, revolutions are nearly always the work of an active minority, and a minority including such great chieftains as the Geraldines, the O'Connors, and the Desmonds would almost constitute a majority among the native Irish. Through Desmond, therefore, Irish nationality in the sixteenth century had struck its first blow.

CHAPTER III

GERALD FITZGERALD IN FRANCE

FROM 1540 to 1579 to invade Ireland and make it a basis for operations against England may be said to have been the settled policy of France. This policy, which had originated in political expediency, now developed a new strength and momentum from religious motives.

With the secession of England from the Catholic Church a new epoch is opened in the history of Europe. Protestantism, which in the eyes of Rome was but one of a thousand heresies for the affliction of mankind, now became a political power. Henry of England, as it were, thrust a sword into the hand of Luther, and immediately there ensued the faint stirrings of a conflict which within a century was to alter the entire European system. For Ireland, Scotland, and France the Reformation in England involved vast and unexpected consequences. The position of Ireland in the European system was clarified and relations with the Continent assumed a new importance. That being so, it is necessary to have an understanding of the main features of the English Reformation.

Catholics the world over, unable to grasp the intellectual subtleties by which Henry tried to

justify his breach with Rome, believed that the real reason was because the Pope had not been compliant enough to revise the ten commandments in the light of his relations with Anne Boleyn. Many centuries have passed since then, and the most secret motives of both parties now lie exposed to the scrutiny of the historian, who must confess that Henry VIII. was certainly not actuated by the highest motives of morality. But Henry was as proud as any Castilian prince, and objected strongly to being called an adulterer—even when the supreme arbiter of morality on earth judged him so. Apparently he considered that Rome should spare a king and one-time ‘Paladin of the Church’ such an odious title. But, though Rome was courteous and whispered her censures below her breath, she firmly refused to give her sanction to Henry’s immorality. The root of the matter was that Catherine had failed to bear him an heir, from which with his usual complacency Henry had drawn or pretended to draw the conclusion that God had not smiled on their union because it was invalid. This curious logic was helped by the fact that he had taken a fancy for one of the ladies at court named Anne Boleyn. Busy brains were set spinning all kinds of objections to his marriage with Catherine, but though some very eminent English canonists proved to their own satisfaction that the marriage was null and void in the sight of God, the Pope was not to be brought round to that opinion, and finally he refused to authorise the divorce.

Once upon a time Henry had posed as the 'Paladin of the Church,' and had launched his thunderbolts of rhetoric against Martin Luther. But times were changed, and Henry, examining the doctrines of Luther 'with more mature intelligence,' found that he had misconstrued the meaning of the great Reformer's doctrines. At the same time his attempts to impose his own views on the Church had evoked the caustic remark of Simonetti—a world-famous canonist—'The sick man on consulting the physician does not himself prescribe the medicine.' Shortly afterwards Henry made the discovery that Papal claims were unsupported by Scripture and were subversive of civil society. His progress along the road of Protestantism was henceforward as rapid as the proprieties would permit. Henry's point of view, in naked fact, would seem to be nothing more than a mixed product of hypocrisy and self-interest. The driving power of this sentiment came from his despotic temperament. According to Luther himself his autocracy was beyond belief. 'Squire Henry,' he remarked, 'means to be God and do as he pleases.' This innate despotism not only caused Henry to break away from Rome, but also demanded that the responsibility for his youthful polemics against Protestantism should be shifted to other shoulders. Sir Thomas More, the author of *Utopia*, one of the finest minds of the age, had helped Henry in the final stages of his work against Luther and had recently expressed different views from his king on matters of religion. There was nothing so offensive

in Henry's eyes as contradiction, and so for all these reasons he determined to make Sir Thomas More the scapegoat of his literary indiscretions and a sacrificial offering on the altar of Protestantism. All Europe was shocked beyond measure at the execution of Sir Thomas More and Fisher. More was one of the most beautiful and radiant spirits that have walked amongst men in this or indeed in any age. Only by a comparison of the *Utopia* with its passionate and almost modern conception of liberty, and a work like Machiavelli's *Prince*—supreme expression of the moral corruption of the age—can we realise what a great and original genius was cut short on the scaffold. More anticipated Rousseau in his perception of the importance and the dignity of the individual soul, and like the great rhetorician of Geneva he headed a spiritual revolt against the gross materialism of his time. A Church that could produce such men as Sir Thomas More and Ignatius Loyola was as near the eternal fountains of beauty and truth as the Churches that produced Calvin or Luther.

In resistance to 'heretical' England another bond of union was forged between the Catholic nations—Ireland and France. Political antagonism to England, we need have no hesitation in saying, received a new impetus and powerful reinforcement from religious sources. But the special significance underlying the English Reformation in the political order was that Rome attempted, on the failure of gentle methods, to bring England back to the fold by force. There

was a general feeling throughout Europe that force could support piety, and indeed not many years later Germany—the very citadel of heresy—was stormed and large parts reclaimed for Catholicity by the naked sword. From 1540 to 1596 Rome never ceased in her efforts to organise a crusade of the Catholic powers against the new apostate. Again and again the Holy See exerted all the powers of its diplomacy to unite the Empire, France, Spain, Scotland, and Ireland against the English. But the spirit which had animated the crusaders had died out in the hearts of men, and never could Rome combine the Catholic powers in a genuine crusade against Protestant England. But if the Pope failed to reconstitute the religious armies of medieval times, he did not fail utterly. He found a ready response to his appeals in the great House of Guise, in Catherine de' Medici, and in Scotland and Ireland. For the rest of the century we will find in existence this Catholic confederacy—whose terms are never clearly formulated, whose identity is almost always a mystery, but which none the less acts with a certain coherence and energy. In the councils of this league Ireland was deemed an important factor—because it was Catholic and because it was one road to the conquest of England. This league is behind all the important scenes in the latter half of the century, sometimes acting from religious motives, sometimes inspired by base political passions, but hardly ever idle; and if one desires to measure the real dynamic force of the sixteenth century, the existence of this Catholic league,

indefinite as it was, may not be overlooked. This was the force which throughout the century, by many channels, subsidised and encouraged the Irish in their fight against England.

Two members of this Catholic party were particularly struck by the strategic importance of Ireland, which they came to consider as the most vulnerable point in English power. As early as 1540 they advocated the French conquest of Ireland, a plan which they continued to advocate for the rest of their lives. These men were Leo Strozzi and Jean de Monluc, Bishop of Valence. Both were men of high rank. Jean de Monluc, the Bishop of Valence, had discharged numerous embassies for Francis I. with marked ability. He was accounted one of the acutest minds in the French diplomatic service, and his suggestions always received the greatest respect. His wide-ranging political vision had seen in Ireland the most vital defect in English power—a door which would open at the word of command and give foreign armies free access and an unrivalled opportunity of bringing England to her knees. In these views he had been further confirmed by visits to Scotland in which he may have come across Irishmen. De Monluc, therefore, was an ardent exponent of the Irish cause on the Continent.¹ His colleague, Leo Strozzi, a man of unusually curious calibre, even at this period

¹ *Lettres et Mémoires d'État*, Ribier, liv. ii. pp. 190, 251, 258, 503, 504, 533, etc. Monluc, *Commentaires et Lettres*, 1521-76. A. de Ruble, *Nouvelles Collections de Mémoires*. T. Oxzieme Choisinin, Michaud et Poujoulat. *Notice of Monluc's Career*, pp. 371-432.

when Europe abounded in hundreds of fantastic personalities, was Prior of Capua, sprung from the same Florentine family as Catherine de' Medici. De Thou pronounces him one of the consummate generals of the time. His career was varied enough in all conscience. At times this militant ecclesiastic played the double rôle of priest and sailor. We are told that he was gentle in the confessional but a terror to those who strayed from the paths of probity on the high seas. This severity was needed—for the trade of piracy was rapidly becoming a menace and a temptation to all honest merchants. Strozzi personifies the dualism of the sixteenth century. He was reared in the cloister, but when theological questions were tested by battle, he took the sword, and like many other churchmen, dealt mighty blows in the wars of religion. It is natural that Strozzi, who exemplified the Church Militant, should be in the van of the attack against England and the first to conceive the design of France invading Ireland.¹

Ireland had fallen on evil days since the death of Desmond. The fatal impetuosity of Silken Thomas had involved the whole house of Kildare in destruction. The young chieftain had paid with his life for his rash outburst of passion, but Henry VIII. was determined to make it an excuse for the extirpation of the FitzGeralds—root and

¹ De Thou, *Historia sui Temporis*, vol. ii. p. 267. Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, p. 95. *Lettres et Mémoires d'Etat*, t. ii. pp. 692, 693, 700, etc. M. le Cimbier et F. Danjou, *Archives curieuses de l'Histoire de France*. Vide *Vie*, etc. Philippe de Strozzi.

branch. The work of extermination was carried out with such ruthless efficiency that in due time there stood between Henry and the extinction of the House of Kildare but the life of a child ten years old—Gerald FitzGerald.

Emissaries were sent far and wide in search of the child, whose death would have been a source of greater satisfaction to the English than a great victory in the field. Seldom has any one led such a life of adventure and vicissitude as did Gerald FitzGerald from 1536-40. Conveyed secretly from place to place he escaped the agents of the Government, but as luck would have it he fell sick with small-pox in Kildare. His tutor—Thomas Leverous—nursed him back to health, and as soon as he could be removed he was carried in a basket to his sister's—Lady Mary O'Connor's—home in Offaly. Lady Mary outwitted the Government for three months, but the chase becoming hot, Gerald was carried by night to Clare, where he was entrusted to the keeping of James Delahide—a man who was behind all the Irish conspiracies of the period. Next the boy was taken to the land of the MacCarthies, who, in spite of considerable pressure, refused to yield him to the Government.¹ But finally Lady Eleanor MacCarthy—Gerald's aunt—decided to bring him to the north, where he would be beyond reach of the Government. They travelled slowly through Thomond, Galway, and Mayo, meeting

¹ *St. Leger and others to Cromwell, January 2, 1538*, vol. x. Stanishurst. Russell, *Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, p. 369. *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 363, 467, 528.

everywhere with the utmost kindness. For all the native Irish vied with each other in their hospitality to this last scion of the great House of Kildare. As the travellers journeyed through Sligo they encountered a bard named M'Grath, who had been attending the schools of poetry in that neighbourhood, and cheered by song and universal kindness, the little company finally reached Tyrconnel in safety. To save her nephew from the clutches of the English Lady Eleanor MacCarthy married the chieftain O'Donnell, and instead of indulging in vain regrets for the past, like the brave woman that she was, proceeded to organise a confederacy of the northern chieftains with Desmond and other friends in Munster and Leinster with the object of breaking English power and restoring young Gerald to his rightful inheritance.¹ She entered into correspondence with the French and Imperialists—asking for immediate assistance. But O'Donnell, unlike the other Irish chieftains, could not be implicitly trusted—for he would sell his soul for gold which the English were bound ultimately to offer as a bribe. Already Grey was suspected to be in correspondence with him. There was no time, therefore, to be lost—for O'Donnell would not be capable of prolonged resistance to such a temptation; and, accordingly, when in 1540 a merchant of St. Malo called Alex Governor arrived in Donegal, he was requested to give young Gerald a passage to France. Warner, an English agent in France, described how Gerald

¹ *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 537. *State Papers*, vol. iii. pp. 18, 19, 44. Stanihurst.

was taken on board. 'At night in a small boat, bareheaded and clad in a saffron shirt and with him but three persons, one being Leverous, his schoolmaster, and if he rebuke him never so little he trembleth for fear.' Father Walsh and a young Irishman were his only other companions. Thus was the head of the great House of FitzGerald stolen on board ship under shelter of night. His worldly possessions were comprised of one hundred and forty moidores from his aunt and some silver plate with which he paid for his passage.¹ But the name of FitzGerald was worth more than gold, for wherever he went he was treated with almost royal honours. On their arrival at Morlaix in Brittany the military governor of the town came down to the water-side to welcome Gerald, and taking him by the hand, led him through the town amid the acclamations of the townspeople. There he remained for three days enjoying the hospitality of the good

¹ Russell, *Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, vol. x. p. 369. Stanihurst, Collins' *Peerage*, vol. vi. pp. 155-7. *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. p. 211. *Letters and Papers, State Papers, Henry VIII.*, 1540, p. 140.

The English were soon notified of Gerald's departure. On 17th March 1540 Grey wrote as follows to Cromwell: 'It was bruited that young Gerald went to France, which thing then I thought best should not be noised, till surer knowledge had been thereof. Certifying your Lordship that since O'Reilly, Sir Gerald FitzGerald, Knight, the Abbot of Clonard, hath sent me sure word that the said Gerald is departed into France, for every one of them sent spies at my commandment to know the truth who hath brought them sure word of his departure, as they have advertised me. I doubt not your Lordship will work herein for his apprehension, as you shall think good. It should be much for the quietness of the king's poor subjects here.' (*State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. p. 193.)

citizens and watched over by the governor for fear the English sleuth-hounds, who came swarming overseas on Gerald's track, might do him any harm.¹ Meanwhile word had been sent forward to Chateaubriand, the Governor of Brittany, that Gerald FitzGerald, the great Irish lord, had arrived and desired his protection. Then bidding farewell to the governor and kindly citizens of Morlaix, our little company of exiles took ship again and were brought by a pilot, named Jacques Cartier, to the sea-coast town of St. Malo. Here again Gerald's welcome was of the warmest description. He tarried six days at St. Malo till the guides from Chateaubriand came to meet him, and then, escorted by the dignitaries of the town, Gerald left St. Malo and took the road to Rennes where the Governor of Brittany, M. Chateaubriand, had his residence. The journey to Rennes was more like the royal progress of some great prince than the hasty flight of a landless lord. Everywhere Gerald was welcomed by the citizens and the people hailed him as 'the King of Ireland whom Henry VIII. had driven from the throne.'²

This popular conception of Gerald as an exiled king is important, because it serves to show that Continentals regarded Ireland as an independent country. No doubt they were also aware that England claimed to possess certain rights in Ireland. But in this age the frontiers of kingdoms

¹ *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, 1540, p. 180.

² *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, 'Warner to English Ambassador in France, May 20, 1540,' p. 211. Stanihurst, *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, p. 246.

were vague and shifting. For instance, Germany was a vast complexity of kings, princes, and bishops, all of whom exercised more or less absolute power within their own jurisdiction, while at the same time they swore allegiance and recognised their vassalage to the Emperor. The Holy Roman Empire, on which the entire European system was founded, being so chaotic, and the plight of Italy and Scotland intensifying this sense of universal confusion, we can easily comprehend the French attitude towards Ireland. Probably they had a dim notion that England claimed suzerainty over Ireland. But as feudal times passed away in most cases such essentially medieval political forms as suzerainty and homage had also perished, and thus most intelligent men on the Continent probably considered that English claims to Ireland rested on an extinct order. From the chaos and confusion which had resulted on the break-up of Christendom, in all directions were emerging national states, some of which had been held in a much more protracted tyranny than England had ever exercised over Ireland, and there was no reason in the world why Ireland should not share in this universal emancipation.

We left Gerald FitzGerald making his way by easy stages to the town of Rennes. The Governor, Chateaubriand, rode out to meet him and for several days Gerald remained as his guest. However, the spies of Henry VIII. were very active again, and so it was thought safer to send Gerald on to Paris where he would be under the protection of the French king. When Gerald and his com-

panions reached the French court they experienced marked kindness at the hands of Francis, who realised that this Irish boy would be worth his weight in gold on the occasion of his next war with England. But if Francis considered he had made a valuable acquisition, at the same time he could not afford to offend England, and if it became public that this fugitive from English injustice was under his protection it might lead to the most undesirable complications with England. Francis was put to the test when Wallop, the English ambassador in France, who had discovered the whereabouts of FitzGerald, accused him of concealing the boy and demanded his surrender as a treaty obligation. The King returned an evasive answer and continued to spin out time until Gerald had been safely smuggled out of Paris and conveyed to the Imperial town of Vincennes. Gerald's departure from Paris had not been a moment too soon, for scarcely was he without the gates when Wallop despatched his agent Barnaby to the King's cabinet to procure a warrant for the boy's arrest. Barnaby's reception by the King's counsellors was dubious in the extreme, and in the following letter to Henry VIII. he discloses his suspicions: 'I perceived how the Constable and Châtillon trifled, and prolonged the matter for the obtaining of the said letters until the child had warning and so conveyed.' The English made further inquiries at the court, but they only gained information which put them on a false scent.¹

¹ 'Barnaby to King Henry VIII.' vol. iii.; 'Sir John Wallop to

Henry was deeply mortified at the failure of his system of espionage, so much so that Thomas Barnaby—who was directing the search for Gerald—thought it necessary to furnish a report of his proceedings, in which he cleverly excuses his inability to secure the person of Gerald. In this despatch Barnaby relates how he happened to fall in with a Breton—named Vincent Noblet—on the road to Rouen. Barnaby engaged the Breton in conversation and from his remarks came to the conclusion that he had had some previous connection with Gerald. The Englishman accordingly set himself out to make friends with the Breton, so successfully that next night they were seated at the same table. Barnaby regaled the Breton to a splendid repast, and when he thought it was time brought the conversation round to the subject which was uppermost in

Essex, April 18, 1540, etc.’ Stanihurst, ‘Wallop to Cromwell, April 18.’ *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, pp. 245, 329, 376.

No one was more anxious for the capture of Gerald than Cromwell, who was now the most powerful man in England. He urged his agents over and over again to secure Gerald by fair means or foul. In response to one of his letters, Thomas Treffrey, an English agent in France, sent him the following information: ‘That certain Truro merchants lately come from Morlaix in Brittany, passing through Fowey on the 25th instant, reported that an Irish lord has landed in Brittany with 30 men and ridden to the French king to have his aid against the king.’ This can have been no other than Gerald, whose progress through France had been too public to pass unnoticed. Then as he journeyed towards Paris the English agents followed hot on his heels. But everybody conspired to protect the Irish boy, and although one of his attendants fell into English hands Gerald himself reached the French capital in safety. Darby Jennings was the name of the captured attendant, and judging from the absence of information in the *State Papers* the English learned nothing of consequence from him. (*Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, 1540, pp. 163, 351, 352.)

his mind—Gerald FitzGerald. Noblet was very reticent—so reticent that Barnaby was compelled to ask him directly whether he knew anything about Gerald FitzGerald, the young Irish lord. Noblet replied that, by order of the Governor of Morlaix, he had acted as the youth's guide, but that some time since they had parted and had not met again. Barnaby seems to have thought that Noblet was not telling all that he knew, for he promised that he would be well rewarded if he caused the 'child' to be delivered up, and said that it would be a meritorious act, as the day would yet come when the boy would curse those who had led him into rebellion. However, the Breton was not to be bribed, and said that not for twenty thousand pounds would he be responsible for surrendering Gerald; 'that he loved the child above all men and wished in God the King's Majesty knew the virtuous and gentle conditions in him.' Gerald must have possessed some rare charm of personality, for all those who came in contact with him speak of his winning manners, his gentle ways, and brilliant bearing. Barnaby concludes his despatch to Henry with the statement that nothing of importance could be got out of the Breton.¹ Ultimately, however, they succeeded in locating Gerald's hiding-place at Vincennes, and again the child changed his place of refuge and sought the protection of the Emperor at Brussels. For a time he resided with the French ambassador in Flanders—M. de Lavaur.

¹ *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. p. 281. *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. xvi. pp. 83, 374, 466.

But the English demanded the immediate surrender of Gerald with such evident animosity that the Emperor, granting Gerald a pension of 100 crowns a month, had him transferred to the Prince Bishop of Liège.¹

Henry was so mortified at the failure of his agents to lay hands on Gerald that he actually put Grey, the late Lord-Deputy of Ireland, to death on the ground that he had connived at Gerald's escapes. The circumstances of Grey's execution are noticed in a despatch from Eustace Chapuys, imperial ambassador in London, to the Queen of Hungary.

For want of more agreeable intelligence I am obliged to recount one piece of intelligence which is by no means pleasant, namely, that lately, on St. Peter's Eve, towards nine o'clock in the morning, the Sieur Leonard, uncle of the Marquis of Exeter and of the Chancellor's wife, was beheaded in front of the Tower. As far as I can learn, he was accused of having, during his government of Ireland, allowed the young Count of Kildare, his nephew, to escape and cross over to France, and thence on to Liège.

Even then Henry did not relax his efforts to secure Gerald, and in addition to writing personally to the Emperor he instructed his agents to bring the matter before the Emperor.² They did so and received small satisfaction, as the following extract from a letter of Pate to Henry shows :

¹ *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. xvi. pp. 83, 374, 466. Collins' *Peerage*, vol. vi. pp. 155-7. *Epistolarum Reginaldi Pole*, vol. iii. Russell, *Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, 1868-69, vol. x. p. 369.

² *Spanish Calendar*, 1538-42, p. 334. *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. xvi. p. 374.

I received your letter of the 7th on the 10th instant. Could not proceed at once, as the Emperor was hunting for two days. Had audience of him the morrow after his return, and was lovingly entertained, most of his chamber being Burgundians anxious to renew the old amity. The Emperor said you had written to him for the delivery of a rebel and certain fugitives, for whose apprehension I had desired a general commission, and the Emperor had agreed to banish them, but said it was against his honour to deliver them up. I desired him not to let Francis surpass him in kindness to you, for Francis had granted an instrument under his broad seal for their apprehension, which had taken effect on the principal party, as it did on his adherents, if he had not saved himself by flight. The Emperor said that treaties with France required deliveries of rebels, but none like that hath been, quoth he, of our parts. Pressed the Emperor further on the danger of having the 'boy maintained in mischief' and was impatiently referred by him to Graneville, etc.¹

Henry was so displeased at the Emperor's refusal to move in the matter of Gerald, that he began to make invidious comparisons between him and the King of France. The Emperor, however, replied that while Francis was pretending to be in search of Gerald he was really getting him out of harm's way. A regular correspondence now ensued, and the question of the young Irish fugitive rose to be a matter of high political importance. Henry and Charles indulged in mutual recrimination. The Emperor made a mock of Francis's alleged anxiety to assist in the capture of Gerald, and Henry asked the French ambassador in London

¹ *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. xvi. p. 374.

to answer these statements. On 23rd June 1540 Marilloc—French ambassador in London—wrote an account of the matter to Francis which is instructive and runs as follows :

He (Henry) informs Francis, as amity requires that nothing should be concealed, that, as regards Gerald, his rebel and traitor, against whom Francis delivered letters of arrest, when the ambassador required the Emperor to do the like in his country, to which the said rebel had now withdrawn according to the treaties, the Emperor replied that in France they had made a pretence of wishing to take him, under cover of which they had let him easily escape, and that indeed he was secretly supported by the French more than by his subjects, as was evident, because the said rebel frequented the house of the said ambassador.¹

The English evidently were endeavouring to use the case of Gerald as a means of stirring up bad feeling between the Empire and France, but they failed in their object, as the following passage from a despatch of Marilloc to Montmorency shows :

As to the Emperor's reply to the English ambassador about the rebel which this King made Marilloc write of in his last. The question did not arise and Marilloc thought best not to renew it, as it might raise suspicion between princes who are otherwise good friends, and this is that the English desire, so that they themselves might remain in surety.

In the end Henry seems to have realised that Gerald was gone beyond his power. The welcome

¹ *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. xvi. p. 466.

which was extended on all sides to this Irish fugitive is truly amazing. Kings and princes vied with each other in protecting him. The people acclaimed him on his way from place to place. Bishops and princes of the Church took him into their households and covered him with honours. The reigning Pontiff himself—Paul the Third—stretched out his hand to help him on his way. We cannot do better than give an extract from the Pope's letter to the Bishop of Liège to illustrate the profound interest which he took in the fortunes of the Irish youth.

Hears that Gerald, son of Gerald late Earl of Kildare, in Ireland, has taken refuge in Liège, fleeing from the fierce persecution of the schismatics by whom his father and elder brother and two uncles were slain, and who no less cruelly seek the life of his survivor, commends the youth to his care, and desires him if he cannot protect him at the age, or if the boy himself wishes to come to the Pope, to assist him in every way. Writes further to Theodoricus Hesius on the matter.¹

Six months passed quietly for Gerald and his companions in the household of the Bishop, who was at the same time the ruler of a state. Then Reginald Pole—a kinsman of Gerald—appeared on the scene and brought the boy to Italy. He was introduced into the greatest houses of the Italians and must have seen Italy and the Renaissance in full flower. He received his education in the houses of the Bishops of Verona and Mantua, and of Gonzago, Duke of Milan, and there in the

¹ *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, p. 375, etc. *Epistolarum Reginaldi Pole*, vols. iii. and iv.

courtly society of learned doctors and brilliant princes we shall leave him for the present.¹

This is not the first occasion we have encountered Reginald Pole in connection with Irish movements, and as the century advances we will meet him again and again. He was the third son of the Countess of Salisbury and grandson of George, Duke of Clarence. In youth he had studied at the great Italian centres of learning, and could number among his friends many of the chief leaders of the 'Humanist' movement. But though an ardent student of Greek literature he never subscribed fully to the religion of beauty preached by the Renaissance. On the contrary, he was typically medieval minded in his attitude towards the arts. To him poetry, with his great Catholic tradition of St. Francis and Dante, was the 'helpmate and the lesser sister of the Church,' and secular studies but an elegant amusement. When many great scholars were embracing the new Paganism, therefore, Pole, although he had fingered the reclaimed treasures of Hellenic literature, preserved a middle course and remained true to St. Augustine and Dante, who are the termini in the medieval thought world. In politics, as in literature, Pole adhered steadfastly to the old order. Pole was then the embodiment of the wisest and best elements in sixteenth-century Catholicity. His mind had not been cankered by the invectives of Luther on the one hand or

¹ *Epistolarum Reginaldi Pole*, vols. iii. and xv. p. 71. *Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, 1868-69, vol. x. pp. 368-9. Collins' *Peerage*, vol. vi. pp. 155-7. *Venetian Calendar*, pp. 77, 227.

enervated by the sensuous productions of Aretino or his like on the other. He was the natural leader in the campaign which Rome initiated against heresy, but his humility would not allow him to take the foremost place in that movement which his talents deserved. None the less Cardinal Pole was the prime mover in many world-wide schemes for the overthrow of 'heretical' nations. Again and again between the years 1539-60 he endeavoured to combine the Empire, France, Scotland, and Ireland in a crusade against England. But his efforts must have forced him to the sad conclusion that 'the religious principle' was no longer a great motive power in European affairs, that political convenience was apt to blind Catholic monarchs, like Francis and Charles, to the difference between a Jew and a Christian, a heretic and a true son of the Church. But Pole was too great a man to adopt a policy of despair, and in default of better allies he used the House of Guise to promote Catholic interests. No doubt he was partly instrumental in creating that curious league of Ireland, Scotland, and France against England, for he appears at the most critical stages of its existence. Pole seems to have been the link between this Franco-Irish entente and the Papacy.¹

The wanderings of young FitzGerald are memorable, not only for their own sake, but also for the witness they bear to the friendly spirit prevailing

¹ Zimmermann, *Kardinal Pole, Sein Leben und Seine Schriften. Epistolarum Reginaldi Pole. Letters and Papers, Henry VIII., 1540*, p. 398.

on the Continent towards Irishmen. A hundred evidences contribute to show us how well known and popular were Irishmen—particularly in France and Spain. Political partnership, no doubt, helped to foster a spirit of mutual goodwill, but perhaps more profound and widespread was the effect exercised on the relations of the two countries by commercial interchange. There was a steady commercial intercourse between Ireland and France dating far back to early Christian times and lasting down to the close of the sixteenth century. Irish ships continually visited the sea-coast towns of Brittany and other French mercantile centres. Irish merchants ventured far inland with their wares, while the French flag was often seen among the fleets of merchant vessels that once filled the harbours of Galway, Cork, Limerick, and Waterford with a busy life. But those were the days of prosperity before the licensed pirates of Elizabeth's reign had come to sweep Irish trade from the seas, and before Mountjoy and Carew had proclaimed a war of extermination on the old Celtic order. Had not England, by repressive measures in Ireland and systematic pillage on the high seas, destroyed Irish commerce, one is safe in saying that the expansive energy which led to vast developments in colonisation and trade in the course of this century would have communicated itself to the Irish and fired them to new activity—with results that no one can measure. Ireland was naturally adapted for an oceanic career; the last outpost of the old world, she faced towards the

new and intercepted the trade of the Loire, the Rhine, and the Baltic, while she watched the Spanish treasure fleets plying between the eastern and western hemispheres. Had Ireland, therefore, been a free country, it is a reasonable conjecture that, instead of being forced along the downward grade in material development, she might have discovered her true vocation on the sea, and perhaps led the way in the exploration and colonisation which makes the sixteenth century one of the golden ages in world history. But this was not to be; for while the rest of Europe was awakening to boundless vistas in science and exploration, the grip of English domination tightened on Ireland so that by the close of the century the rich possibilities and the rising promise in the national system had been well-nigh strangled. Lest this be considered an overstatement of the case, we would recall the fact that from beginnings not very different from those in Ireland, the English in this century developed the sea power which drove back the Armada and made possible the exploration of vast tracts in America and the Indies. Besides Ireland occupied a slightly superior position to England. Geographically speaking, Ireland was splendidly situated. She lay right across the track between the old and the new worlds and seemed naturally designed for launching ships across the Atlantic. But from the Garden of the Hesperides Ireland was shut out by a foreign occupation which crushed the national spirit and repressed national endeavour. When, at the close of the sixteenth

century, the English could pride themselves on being lords of the sea, Irish harbours lay idle, Irish commerce had practically come to an end. But if England had prospered it had been at the expense of Spain, France, and in a lesser degree, of Ireland. The amazing growth of English commercial enterprise was due to the conjunction of two forces. The fostering hand of a strong and unscrupulous government directed the overflowing vitality of the English nation into the channels of exploration and trade, and secondly, an opportunity which comes but once in the life of a nation had come with unrivalled seductions in the shape of new worlds, teeming with fabulous riches, waiting to be conquered.

One reflection we have in concluding. The commonest taunt of Englishmen against the Irish is embalmed in the phrase 'the lazy, ineffectual Celt.' First raised to the dignity of a philosophy and refined to suit the higher intellect by Matthew Arnold, this gibe of 'Irish futility' recurs in a thousand forms, and, in fact, has become a dogma with a certain class of English historians. This attitude of mind, where it is not an outcome of ignorance or stupidity, is a piece of hypocrisy which even the most dispassionate historian of Ireland must find it hard to bear. It is written in letters of fire on our history that English domination has waged relentless war on Irish energies, both in the spiritual and in the material order—that England strove desperately to murder the Irish nation, that she failed in the attempt but doomed the Irish race to perpetual struggle

and a task as laborious as that of Sisyphus. In the sixteenth century the wheel of conquest, upon which the Irish nation was to be broken, had begun to revolve. The twentieth century finds it still revolving.

CHAPTER IV

FRANCE, IRELAND, AND SCOTLAND

ON 22nd July 1543, Henry VIII. delivered an ultimatum to France, so worded as to be tantamount to a declaration of war. It was the culmination of the hostility which had been steadily increasing between the two countries during the last three years. Experience had taught Henry the wisdom of keeping his arrogance within reasonable bounds and the days were long past when he believed that England was a match for a world in arms. Consequently he had already formed a secret alliance with the Emperor Charles V., and it was settled that Imperial and English troops should invade France simultaneously. Exactly a year later Henry crossed the Channel to put himself at the head of the English army, so confident was he that victory would be easily achieved. But he had reckoned without his host. For the French reception was so warm as to be embarrassing. More important still, he soon found that he could not count upon the assistance of Charles. These divergencies of aim were quickly detected by the French, who worked them for all they were worth. The result was that indecision ruled the councils of England and Austria whose alliance, instead of their making,

seemed likely to prove their undoing. But the situation was still full of difficulties for the French, who were thirsting for revenge on England as the author of all their misfortunes.

At this moment Gerald FitzGerald, having completed his studies, reappears in France as a handsome and accomplished young man. Looking about for a means of retaliating on England, Francis seems to have seen in FitzGerald the instrument he required. If once landed in Ireland, and adequately supported by French troops, Gerald was likely to raise a storm against English power that would keep Henry fully occupied perhaps for a generation. No doubt Cardinal Pole and the Papal party in Europe were urging some such scheme as this on Francis. For on the 20th of October 1543 Harvel reported to Henry from Venice that 'there is mention of certain practices for sending Paris, Kildare (FitzGerald), Brensetour, with other semblable rebels, to Scotland by order of the Romish Bishop and French King.'¹ This new project of Francis's seems to have recommended itself to his councillors, for in the summer of 1544 large forces were concentrated in Brittany and a fleet of ships was being rapidly organised. Nantes became the headquarters of the expeditionary force: there munitions were being piled up, soldiers mobilised, and all the hundred requirements of an army destined to act at a considerable distance from its base ascertained and supplied. As was to be expected,

¹ *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. ix. part v. 'Harvel to King Henry VIII., 20th October 1543,' p. 522.

Monluc, the Bishop of Valence, and Strozzi, the Prior of Capua, who had long advocated the French conquest of Ireland, now that the project was actually to be attempted, took a foremost part in its organisation. It was finally decided that the expedition should sail from Brest, and there all the munitions, stores, and troops were finally concentrated. The expeditionary force numbered 15,000 veteran soldiers, which was deemed adequate for the conquest of a country that was already on the brink of rebellion. There was some difficulty in regard to the most convenient landing-place, but it was generally believed that either O'Donnell's country or either of the royal towns—Limerick or Waterford—would be the place selected. But others held that the French would disembark somewhere in Kerry, which was awaiting their arrival in tense expectation.¹

Meanwhile in Ireland the conspiracy had spread widely. The Irish chieftains were in correspondence with FitzGerald and the French king. French agents had been travelling through the country and had held conferences with many of the strongest chieftains. O'Donnell had been sounded and it was thought his co-operation secured.² Outside the Pale there could be ex-

¹ *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. p. 501, etc. *Mémoires de Martin du Bellay*, liv. x. pp. 550-82.

² *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. p. 515. There are other evidences of French anxiety to create a diversion in Ireland, which for lack of corroborative date we think best to leave out of the general narrative. According to Ware, whose accuracy is usually indubitable, Theobald de Bois, a French nobleman, was sent by Francis to Ireland in order to raise the country against the English. The French agent

pected a universal rising as soon as the French and Gerald made their appearance. The whole country was seething with discontent, many still remembered the tragic fate of the Geraldines, and although Henry tried a policy of conciliation, its soothing effects were more than counterbalanced by his religious policy. The repudiation of the Pope, the destruction of shrines and relics, the abolition of monasteries and the persecution of the monks, horrified the Irish people. Unlike the English, the Irish people were unable to accompany Henry along those higher levels of politics and theology from which the Pope had the appearance of an impostor and monks the cloven hoofs which announced their Satanic origin. The Irish still breathed the aspirations of a bygone age and were still filled with the reactionary spirit of the crusades. Such was the English viewpoint, a compound of ignorance and hypocrisy. However, in those 'obscurantist' monks, driven from the cloister, and forced to wander from house to house, Irish

came to O'Donnell, and offered to supply him with men and money if he would undertake a campaign against England. O'Donnell declined the offer as he did not consider the time opportune for venturing on such a dangerous course. All the more eagerly, therefore, did Francis turn towards Gerald FitzGerald and press him to head the invasion of Ireland. For in those days the name of Kildare commanded greater respect in Ireland than even that of O'Donnell. Ware refers to this negotiation in the following terms: 'The same year Francis King of France having notice of the war that was announced against him by Henry King of England, and likewise of his agreement with the Emperor, in opposition to him, he despatched away for Ireland Theobald de Bois, with a message to proffer money and arms to O'Donnell in case he would make war against the English there.' (Ware, *Annals of Ireland*, p. 109.)

nationality found new and eloquent champions. We may be confident that these dispossessed monks welcomed the prospect of a French invasion, which would be certain to restore the ancient faith and the good old ways of Christendom. All the surviving relatives of the Geraldines could also be depended upon to rally to the French flag to fight for young Gerald's rights. His aunt, Lady Eleanor MacCarthy, was working on his behalf in the south, and it was believed her sons, MacCarthy Righ and MacCarthy More, were involved in the conspiracy.¹ The conspirators were adepts in their profession, for, although the Government was engaged in probing the ramifications of the conspiracy for many months, it could only obtain the most general information. Enough was discovered, however, to make them highly apprehensive of an invasion. The Lord Justices and Council presented a full report of the earlier proceedings of the conspiracy to Henry VIII. As this account is valuable by reason of the light which it throws upon the life and doings of young FitzGerald in France, it is given here in its entirety.²

It may please your Most excellent Majesty to be advertised, that the Mayor and citizens of your Highness City of Waterford have by their letters signified unto us, that by such espial as they have from the parties beyond the sea, young Gerald, the Earl of Kildare's son, late being in Italy, is come into Brittany to the town of

¹ *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. p. 502. *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. xix. part i. p. 337.

² *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. p. 501.

Nantes. At what place there is by appointment of the French king, a navy prepared to set the said Gerald, with an army into this your realm. And they of Waterford have knowledge, as they affirm, that they have determined to besiege Waterford, in so much as they (like honest men, and faithful subjects to your Highness) make, to their powers, preparations in making of bulwarks and other necessary munitions for their defence. Albeit, most dread sovereign Lord, we fear, if such thing doth chance, they, with all our helps shall not be able without further furniture to resist the same. The cause of their knowledge is this. William de la Cluse, a man of an honest estimation dwelling in Bridges (Bruges), whose father was the host of the Irishmen resorting thither, hath advertised them as well of young Gerald FitzGerald being at Nantes, as of the preparation of the navy and crew appointed to him to arrive in Ireland. And further, certain men of your Majesty's town of Wexford, being prisoners in Brittany, were (like as all Irishmen since these wars being well entertained there) honestly delivered, and in the end willed to adhere to the same Gerald, and to be in his entertainment. Whereupon, they, having no mind to ensue the same, when they were at liberty, and had their passports, stole away to another port, and they and others, being there prisoners, have often been demanded of what strength MacCarthy Righ and MacCarthy More be, and especially MacCarthy Righ, so as we conjecture clearly that the French king will, if he may by any means possible, annoy this year your Majesty's realm.

And albeit, Most gracious Lord, that Waterford is a proper city, and a good port for the Frenchmen to trade between Brytayne and Scotland, yet, if they intend to maintain Scotland, and to give impediment to your Majesty here by maintenance of young Gerald, we think

rather they will first arrive among the said MacCarthys, where they be divers goodly havens, and those countries adjoining to your city of Cork, take and garrison that city and port, which lieth most directly to Brytayne of any other within this your Grace's Realm. Whereupon we thought meet, in discharge our bounden duties, to signify the same to your most excellent Majesty accordingly. For if there should come an army, either to besiege any of your Highness cities or ports here, or invade this your Realm, without farther provision of men and munition than is here already, your Majesty, we fear, might perchance take dishonour, for as for the crew of five hundreth, is a small number to resist an army. And here is small store of artillery, neither of bowes, bills, nor powder, and of strings and spears none, neither yet men to use your Grace's ordnance, as your servant Mr. Travers knoweth. And since the departure of your Highness Deputy, having viewed what munition there is with your cities, or artillery in the country, we find great lack, for, according to our former certificate, these two or three years past, there came neither guns nor powder from the parties of beyond the sea, neither are the merchants suffered to bring artillery out of England. In which we humbly beseech your Majesty to provide some remedy, and that it may please the same to cause all necessary munition to be sent hither with your said Deputy. (Sentleger returned to Ireland in August to put the country in a state of defence.) And because it may be said, and that truly, that the Irishmen being reconciled and joined with us, we together were sufficient to resist nine or ten thousand Frenchmen, thereto we think that, in effect, all the country would join with us against them. And all other strangers, if young Gerald came not with them. But, when for his kin, alliance, and friendship, and what for their own private censualtye to their old ravyne and

customs, no doubt hath the said MacCarthys one of them being son to Eleanor (she had married MacCarthy Reagh), aunt to the said Gerald, will join with him, they being able to make three thousand footmen. And for that purpose we have as well O'Connor (who, since the departure of Your Majesty's deputy, refuseth utterly to come to speak with us), as well the Geraldines (the Earl of Desmond only excepted), and others, vehemently suspected to take his part.

And for fear thereof, we have as well determined, with all diligence, to put the country in a readiness, as also retain at the charge of us, and other your poor Subjects in these parts, two hundred galloglasses. And willed the Earls of Ormond and Desmond to retain every of them as many within their rule, at the charge of your Grace's Subjects—Whereunto they most willingly condescended to serve your Majesty. And thus we beseech Almighty God to send your Most excellent Majesty long and prosperous life, with continual victory over your enemies. At Your Majesty's city of Dublin, the 20th of May, the 36th year of your Majesty's most prosperous reign (1544), etc.

Post Scriptum.—We received letters from your Majesty's most honourable counsel of the bruit of young Gerald being in Brittany. And for our parts, God willing, we shall not only have vigilant eye to his landing, but also do as much for his resistance as shall lie in our possible powers.¹

The next despatch from the Government in Ireland relates some particulars in connection with Sir Gerald Alymer's illegitimate son, who was acting on behalf of Gerald, which incidentally corroborate the other accounts of the expedition.

¹ *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. p. 301, etc. *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. xix. part i. p. 337.

It may please your Most excellent Majesty to be advertised that, since our last certificate made to your Highness touching the bruit of young FitzGerald's arrival into this your Realm, there is a young man base son to Sir Gerald Alymer, Knight, your Grace's chief Justice here, who hath remained prisoner among the Bretons, in Crossewyke, these two years past, or thereabouts, and is now returned hither in company with two other of your Grace's subjects and merchants of your town of Wexford. And being (upon knowledge thereof given to us) suspected, for that he came from those parts, to have brought some private letters from the said young Gerald to such as are his secret friends here, we examined him, who, without colour or dissimulation (as far as we could conceive) frankly declared unto us that, at his departure thence, it was openly bruited that the French king had a Navy ready appointed at the town of Brest, with 15,000 men, to set the said Gerald on land here. And, as far as heard say, or could conjecture, either in O'Donnell's country, or else at one of your Grace's cities of Limerick or Waterford. They have further bruited, that there is also ready 52 sail to advance towards Scotland, etc.¹

These reports show how weak was England's hold on Ireland in the middle of the sixteenth century and how easily its conquest could be accomplished by an invader. But now that the English Government were apprehensive of an invasion they acted with energy. The towns were put in a state of defence, the loyal population mustered and drilled, and beacons placed on the sea-coast to give the alarm.² The measures

¹ *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. p. 503. *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. xix. p. 433.

² *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. pp. 517, 522.

taken for the defence of Ireland against a French descent were ridiculously inadequate, as is frankly admitted in the correspondence of the Irish Government with the English Privy Council. The state of Ireland is amply illustrated in the following letter :

The Lord-Deputy and Council to the King and Council in England, 6th May 1545.

And forasmuch as the bruit hath been here, that the French king will send some number of men of war to accompany young Gerald, to arrive somewhere within this his Grace's said Realm. We have, for residence thereof, not only erected beakons upon the sea coasts in places convenient, but also caused all his Majestie's people of his whole English pale, in all places, as well within cities and towns, as in the country, to make their muster and to be in a continual readiness so as, God willing, we shall be prest and ready for to resist his enemies, in case they will attempt any such thing, as far as our power and lives shall extend.

And again on 11th May, in answer to instructions received from England, the Irish Privy Council writes :

It may further please your Honours to be advertised that, since the writing of our letters unto you, we received your letters dated the 2nd of April, which come to us the 6th of May, and according the contents thereof, although we had before taken order for Cork and Kinsale, we have lately sent thither, to cause them to do, what may be done, for the fortification of their towns, and have also appointed the said Sir Osborne, with all convenient speed to repair thither with forty of the retinue here, to assist those of the same towns. Nevertheless, your Honours must

consider that, in case an army should arrive there, and were disposed to arrest upon the winning of the same towns, it would be hard to save them, etc.¹

At the last the English Government expected that the French descent on Ireland would take place in the course of the year 1544, and, as they could not afford to risk a general engagement, they resolved to deal with the Franco-Irish menace in detail, and were hopeful that by insidious encouragement of local faction they would cause a general paralysis of the Irish effort.² The licence of these intrigues on the part of the Irish indicates the limits to English power in Ireland at this time. The forces of the Crown were hardly able to maintain their hold on the Pale. Beyond was an unconquered country which at any moment might be expected to pour irresistible forces across the border and sweep every vestige of English authority into the seas. But the years passed and no French invasion loomed on the horizon.

The conspirators waited its arrival in an agony of expectation, for the survival of feudalism in Ireland was a serious obstacle to any centralised effort, and the leaders were well aware that only by an outside force, such as a foreign army, could the chieftains be united in the common cause. Upon its arrival, therefore, depended their one chance of success. The weakness of this system of countervailing alliance had always been due to the fact that the Irish were liable to be

¹ *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. p. 522.

² *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. p. 506.

left in the lurch at the call of convenience. On this occasion certain developments in the theatre of war decided the French not to abandon, but to alter their plans with regard to Ireland. The project of an invasion seems to have been entertained only in the last resort. If everything failed at home then they would stake their fortunes on a bold stroke in Ireland, which, perhaps, would have the effect of recalling the English armies from France. But the differences between Henry and Charles, which had been visible from the start, became so acute by the summer of 1544 as to bring operations against the French to a standstill. This was a marvellous piece of luck for the French and offered a splendid opening for their diplomacy. Henry, as the least scrupulous of their enemies, first received their attentions, and though they offered him good terms of peace, as he hoped for better in the near future, he declined to accept them. The French promptly informed Charles that his ally had been trying to secure peace behind his back, and the latter naturally decided to make a separate peace without consulting Henry. On 18th September 1544 the Peace of Crespy was signed between France and the Empire. From London Henry denounced this Peace as an act of desertion on the part of Charles, but the latter was too well informed as to Henry's attempted perfidy to feel conscience-stricken. Henry had committed a similar sin—at least in thought. Thus French diplomacy had triumphed all along the line, and Henry had become a laughing-stock for the Chancelleries of

Europe. France no longer trembled on the edge of destruction, and every day the Irish enterprise faded into the background. In consequence of the new situation Henry had to stomach his pride and yield to the necessity of peace with France. Negotiations went on through the autumn, but they invariably foundered on the same point. France wanted Boulogne and Henry stubbornly declared that they would never get it. These events had suspended the Irish expedition, but, when at the close of 1544 the French realised Henry would never yield Boulogne except at the point of the sword, they resumed their Irish plans, but this time in connection with elaborate schemes for the recapture of Boulogne and the relief of Scotland.

One of the attractions of the Scottish and Irish policy was that it was equally applicable in times of peace. Nations in the sixteenth century preferred to wage underhand war. It was so universally practised and so profitable that all Europe conspired to regard it as a legitimate recreation breaking the monotony of peace. France was avowedly in frequent communication with the Irish, assisting them with money and munitions, and yet nobody in England would dream of construing these hostile acts as a *casus belli*.

From the close of 1544 to unite Ireland and Scotland against England had been the constant object of French policy. The Irish expedition, which we have seen waiting at Brest in 1544, altered its destination in 1545 for Scotland.

Thence, reinforced by large Scottish contingents, it was to cross to Ireland. The causes of this new policy must be briefly summed up.

Until the year 1541 the policy of Scotland had almost invariably been controlled in the French interest. Scotland was the gate to England held by a French guard, and Henry VIII., who saw the dangers of the situation, resolved that Scotland, at all costs, must be brought into subjection. Fortune smiled on his purpose, and by the year 1545 there seemed to stand between the union of England and Scotland but three obstacles—‘a Frenchwoman, a new-born girl, a cardinal whose policy had issued in overwhelming disaster.’ The ‘Frenchwoman’ was the Queen-Mother, Mary of Lorraine, sister of the famous Duke of Guise. We shall encounter this remarkable personality many times in the history of the next twenty years, for she interested herself in Ireland and probably originated the policy of combining the two countries against England. One of those passionate and formidable women in which this age is so prolific, she loved God and she loved France with a strong, enduring, and self-sacrificing love. She saw in England the arch heretic—the Anti-Christ of the nations whom it was her glorious privilege to combat. The ‘new-born girl’ was Mary—the luckless Mary Queen of Scots—whose beauty and misfortune were yet to ring throughout Europe. But the child slept peacefully in the cradle—blissfully oblivious of what the future was to bring. The ‘Cardinal’ was David Beaton—a soldier prelate—full of resource

and will power. The French, however, were not inclined to desert their Scottish allies; on the contrary, they regarded Scotland as the corner-stone of French power, and were ready to empty their exchequer and spill their blood in torrents rather than relinquish the kingdom of Scotland.

In spring 1545 Francis had elaborated schemes for the relief of Scotland and Ireland in conjunction with the recapture of Boulogne. A large fleet was organised, and we may be assured that the Irish flotilla was requisitioned on the grounds that, when Boulogne was captured, they would proceed to the invasion of Ireland. The capture of Boulogne was to be the first objective and the main fleet was to be engaged in that task. Simultaneously a small contingent was to undertake the descent on Ireland. Probably Fitzgerald convinced Francis I. of the ease of the enterprise; all Ireland being in thorough sympathy, a few thousand troops would be sufficient to deal with the English garrison. But as the French could not spare many troops the Irish were to call on Scotland and, reinforced by M'Connell, the Lord of the Isles, invade Ireland in the summer.¹

¹ *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. xv. part II. pp. 76, 77, 244, 255, 509, 518, 519, 527, etc.; vol. xx. part I. pp. 15, 49, 61, 98, 115, 136, 186, etc. *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. p. 515; vol. iv. p. 432.

The English were vigilant. St. Leger, writing to Wriothesley on 26th February 1545, says: 'Here runs a bruit that in the beginning of the Summer the Scots will send one M'Connell, of the isles (M'Connell Lord of the Isles) with many wild Scots to land in the north of this land, where young Gerald, by aid of the Frenchmen, will also arrive.' *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. xx. part I. p. 115.)

The Irish and Boulogne expeditions, although carried out separately, are interconnected in such a way as renders it necessary for us to have a knowledge of the fate of the Boulogne expedition in order to trace the course of the Irish one. First with regard to the Boulogne expedition. In July a French fleet appeared in the Solent, and after having made vain attempts to entice the English into the open, sailed away again. In August the rival fleets came within striking distance of each other off Shoreham.¹ The English sailors had not been impressed by French seamanship, and so they offered battle. The result was not decisive, but the English had shown themselves slightly superior. By nightfall the French had drifted out of sight, and before August had closed the French fleet, which was to achieve such great things both in England and Ireland, had gone to pieces. The main enterprise had therefore miscarried, and advisers were not wanting to counsel Francis in favour of peace and an abandonment of the whole scheme. Little can be ascertained with regard to the Irish expedition other than that it sailed for Scotland in June and here awaited the outcome of the Boulogne expedition. No doubt they depended in great measure upon the co-operation of this fleet, and by August the defeat off Shoreham proved that they could leave it out of their reckoning. In November the remnants of the great fleet reached Dumbarton, but the survivors were too down-hearted to undertake anything in the nature of a descent on Ire-

¹ *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. xx. part II. p. 60, etc.

land. Besides, the victory of the English had not been lost on the Scottish lords, and the Lord of the Isles, instead of assisting FitzGerald, deserted to the English. This dealt the Irish expedition its death-blow. In November a number of French ships were sighted off the Irish coast, and it is within the bounds of conjecture that they contained the disheartened Irish making their way back to France after this signal reverse of fortune.¹

Both expeditions had failed, but the English had not seen the last of FitzGerald. Francis I. was slow to confess defeat, and although he contracted peace with England in June 1546, he set about devising new plans for the relief of Scotland in which Gerald FitzGerald was called on to play an important part.

Before dealing with the next phase in the life of FitzGerald we must take a comprehensive survey of the political drama which gave him a new part to play.

¹ *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. xx. part i. pp. 247-8, 345. *State Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. iii. pp. 525-45.

On 14th April (1545) St. Leger gives Henry an account of the state of affairs in Ireland: 'There is a bruit that certain Scots in the beginning of this summer will arive in the north, and that the French king will send young Garrett (Gerald) to join them.' The same day St. Leger writes to the Council: 'In the beginning of this summer shall be sent unto the north of this realm a certain captain of the wild Scots, to join whom the French king will send young Gerald.' But by the close of the summer apparently the failure of Gerald's expedition to arrive was taking effect—for St. Leger has to report that several of the Irish chieftains are inclined to make their submission. (*Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, part i. pp. 247, 248, 345; part ii. pp. 46, 54, 55, 91, 138, 139, etc.)

In 1545, the French invasion having completely failed, things seemed to be at a deadlock. Henry VIII. was nearing his end, but before he lay down to die he struck a parting blow at Scotland. The English raided across the Border and slaughtered and burned like veritable furies. Then the French faction which had been meddling with Ireland next engaged Henry's attention. On 29th May 1546 Cardinal Beaton, who had been the animating spirit of Scottish resistance, was foully done to death. Cardinal Beaton had been the most trusted adviser of the Queen-Dowager, Mary of Lorraine, and no doubt was a party to her schemes for Ireland. Perhaps the last eminently feudal figure, in the character of this extraordinary man is crystallised the will power and the ferocity of the northern peoples. At times we behold him in his Cardinal's robes spinning vast combinations for the confusion of England. At times he stalks through those wild scenes, clad in bloody mail—a sinister figure in English eyes and a formidable champion of Scottish liberties. Carried on the wings of the wind the joyful tidings that his life-long enemy was no more reached Henry, and for a while revived the life energies which were ebbing fast. But Henry's life of insatiable activity told heavily at the last. On 31st January 1547 his death was publicly announced.

Henry VIII. was a strange amalgam of good and bad qualities. He was gross, cruel, and hypocritical as few kings before or since, but he was possessed of terrific energy, will power, and tenacity. His rude and arrogant nature fitted

him to govern men who, for all the talk about progress, had not yet emerged from the Dark Ages, and who, more often than not, were converted to Lutheranism, not so much from a pious desire to cultivate the individual conscience as an unlawful desire to be free from all moral restraints. Henry realised perfectly the shortcomings of his people and did not allow himself to be betrayed by excessive optimism on the one hand or excessive severity on the other into a false policy. He shared neither in the polish nor the putrescence of the Italian autocrats. His coarseness, his sensuality, was that of an English squire, and at least, to his credit, let it be remembered that he was free from the cold-blooded indecency affected by Continental princes. Then he was not lacking in a sense of humour from which on occasion he could draw coarse and effective repartee. Henry VIII. conveys the impression of vigour and enormous vitality. He resembles in many respects that mighty creation of Rabelais—Gargantua. For he was the embodiment of the materialism of his time and is perhaps the most typical representative of the economic revolution which accompanied the Reformation, and which eventually established a new landed aristocracy far more grasping, corrupt, and irreligious than the old. Had Henry been born in gentler times he might easily have proved an expansive, broad-minded, and progressive monarch. As it was he was neither better nor worse than his contemporaries. He attempted to found the Reformation in Ireland, but there it struck no lasting roots. There, too, he would

have liked to pursue a policy of force, but for lack of funds he was compelled to pursue a policy of conciliation.¹

The new King Edward VI. was yet a child, and in his minority the government of England was carried on by Somerset, who was king in all but name. Almost the last words of Henry VIII. had been to urge Somerset to pursue a vigorous Scottish policy. His entreaties had not fallen on deaf ears, for Somerset was as anxious for the Union of Scotland with England as Henry had ever been. The character of the 'Protector' was a pleasant contrast to that of Henry VIII.—grave, elevated, and humane, he was woefully out of place in this age of poniards and poison. One of his first acts had been to destroy the apparatus of despotism which Cromwell and Henry VIII. had been at such pains to construct. But for all that he was bent upon the aggrandisement of Scotland. At first he refused to entertain the idea of drawing the sword, but, later on, he declared that he would fight 'to make an end of all wars, to conclude an eternal and perpetual peace.' He would, as the dubious champions of liberty are apt to declare, save Scotland from herself and the seductions of France. England was not without legal warrant for these claims. In 1543 the Scottish Parliament had committed itself to a marriage between the children Mary of Scotland and Edward of England. But the

¹ 'King Henry VIII. to Surrey,' No. xii. (*State Papers, Henry VIII.*, (Ireland)); 'Surrey to Henry VIII., July 8-31, 1521' (*State Papers, Henry VIII.* (Ireland)).

French had persuaded the Scottish to break this match, and now Somerset insisted that either Scotland would stand by the bargain or else take the consequences. But England would find it extremely difficult to carry out her threats. Already there were rumours of another war with France. And Cardinal Pole was, according to trustworthy informants, moving heaven and earth for an immediate attack on England. Scotland, encouraged by French troops, French munitions, and French money, refused to bow the neck to the English yoke, and for answer raided far into English territory. An invasion of Scotland by large English forces was imminent in the summer of 1547. And in July Strozzi arrived with reinforcements from France. Events marched rapidly, for the English were anxious to try conclusions before winter had set in. On 10th September the armies of Scotland and England joined battle at Pinkie. Ere nightfall the Scots were in headlong flight and England had gained a great victory.¹ Four thousand Irish archers had fought on that day under the leadership of Argyll. But this did not imply a conquest of Scotland, because in those days countries seldom put forth their full strength. It was nearly impossible to destroy a State that was hundred-headed. In modern times dislocate the brain-centre and the whole system is paralysed. It behoved Francis I. to deal with the new situation

¹ Sadler, *History of Scotland (Negotiations in Scotland)*, *State Papers*, vol. iv. De Thou, *Historia sui Temporis*, vol. ii. p. 267. *Pièces et Documents inédits relatifs à l'Histoire de l'Écosse*, liv. ii. p. 172.

in Scotland. So long as Mary—the infant queen—remained without a husband, Scotland was certain to be the battlefield of the rival suitors—France and England. Ultimately he selected no less a person than Gerald FitzGerald as the future husband of Queen Mary.

There were many things to recommend such a solution of the difficulty. By this means Scotland, Ireland, and France could be ranged against England, and against such a combination England could not stand. We cannot tell who originated this scheme, but we would suggest that Cardinal Pole and Strozzi, who figure largely in these transactions, and whom we know to have favoured FitzGerald, proposed the idea to Francis. When Gerald set out for Scotland Pole accompanied him.¹ The materials bearing on this passage of history are scanty and almost devoid of information, but there are external evidences which seem to indicate the existence of a widespread Franco-Irish conspiracy. Ireland was in open rebellion during the year 1547, O'Donnell rose out in the north, and 15,000 Scots landed to support him. The Geraldines and the O'Connors were ravaging the Pale.² The Earl of Desmond was suspected of being in correspondence with the French, and so notorious an intriguer as James Delahide³ had arrived in Ireland and was thought to be in the company of the Earl. There can be no doubt that

¹ *Venetian Calendar*, 1534-54, p. 227.

² *Four Masters*, 1547.

³ 'Bellingham to the Mayor of Cork, August 1548,' 'Mayor of Cork to Bellingham, 18th November,' 'Alen to Somerset, 21st November 1548' (*Irish State Papers*).

he was on a mission from Gerald. It was said that Gerald FitzGerald would make a dramatic appearance shortly, and the English authorities were apprehensive of a French invasion which would establish a fortress at Skerries to protect the passage to Scotland.¹ Those movements in Ireland, though obscure in their aims, were extensive in their ramifications and kept English nerves on edge. Though we can lay our hands on no direct evidence to prove that FitzGerald was the mainspring of all these disturbances, it seems very probable that he was in correspondence with the Irish chieftains, to whom he may have unfolded the plans for a united Scotland, Ireland, and France against the English.

As the year wore on apparently the volume of French opinion in favour of FitzGerald's marriage with Mary of Scotland increased. The success of

¹ *Irish State Papers*. Delahide had been all his lifetime employed in rebellious activities. *Irish MSS. State Papers, London. History of Kildares (Marquis of Kildare)*, p. 61.

In the month of November there was talk of a French invasion in both England and Ireland. It was generally believed that Gerald FitzGerald would command the expedition. On 31st November Sir John Alen wrote to the Protector—Somerset—that some Irishmen who had been prisoners in Brittany had come through Scotland and were saying 'that the French King will advance an army into this realm, with young Gerald, with these additions that they cannot keep Scotland without they have Ireland, and that the French King, on Michaelmas day, shall be King of Ireland. There is, as these men report arrived here a quarter past one, James Delahide, which was the decier of your Graco's servant Walshe, when he was at Paris. He came from young Gerald, through France and Brittany, by the French King's safe conduct. I am of opinion that the Frenchman will not land in the south, but put Gerald and some light company on land there.'

English arms in Scotland made the question of what was to be done with Mary still more pressing. At length seven French ships with FitzGerald on board one of them set sail and arrived at Dumbarton a few days before Christmas Day. And it was said that 'Gerald of Kildare should marry the Scottish queen, and array all Ireland in their party against England.'¹ And further that before Easter there should be such a battle fought as England would rue it.' But courtships are always a precarious matter, and Gerald, in spite of his good looks and easy manners, did not prosper in his suit. Had Gerald come a few months earlier he might have gained the hand of Mary and the crown of Scotland, but now the ruthless march of events effectually shattered his plans.² Francis I., who

¹ *Domestic Calendar, Edward VI.*, vol. iii. *History of Kildares (Marquis of Kildare)*, 1862, pp. 59-60.

² *Domestic Calendar, Edward VI.*, vol. iii. *Irish Calendar, 1505-73*, p. 92.

That Cardinal Pole used his influence on behalf of Gerald's marriage with Mary Queen of Scots is hardly a matter of doubt. To what extent Strozzi was involved is a more difficult question. He must have had some voice in the matter, for he organised the expeditions which sailed to the relief of Scotland in July 1547 and spring 1548. When Gerald went to Scotland in the December of 1547 Cardinal Pole went with him, and nothing but a matter of the utmost consequence could have brought a powerful and conspicuous churchman like Pole so far out of his way. When Gerald's suit failed Cardinal Pole returned to France, and from the terms of a letter which he addressed in Gerald's favour to the Bishop of Venosa we can perceive his connection with the marriage negotiations.

Cardinal Pole to the Bishop of Venosa, 5th May 1548: 'From the bearer of the present letter, an Englishman, Sir Oswald Massingberd, Prior of Ireland, the Bishop will hear the causes which have induced him to endeavour to go with the French Armada in the company of our Irish Earl Gerald whom he recommends to the bishop, together with

must have fathered the project of this marriage, died in 1547, and his successor, Henry II., reversed his policy. His whole attention was centred in Scotland, but ultimately he decided not to allow such a rich prize as the Scottish queen to fall to the lot of this wandering Irishman. Instead, he would marry her to his own son, Francis II., and thus unite the crowns of Scotland and France. This project was probably first mooted towards the close of 1547 when Gerald FitzGerald was at Dumbarton. The Queen-Dowager, being a

this cause, in the service of God and his Church, for which Pole will be specially obliged to him.'

Further light is shed on Gerald's visit to Scotland by some depositions made at the time by seamen, the substance of which is given below.

On 19th January John Ledwich, alias Gonnell, and Thomas Verdon were examined before the Sheriff of Cornwall and others at Penzance. Ledwich was master of a vessel called the 'Kateryn of Sumpter,' of Bristol, and stated that his vessel having been taken by the 'Christopher of Leith,' the captain of the latter told him that on the Thursday before Christmas there had arrived at Dumbarton seven French vessels, having on board 'the young Garrett of Kildare, with forty or fifty French officers,' etc. Thomas Verdon, mariner of the bark 'Patrick of Dunerdarthe' in Ireland, said that the vessel in which he was, having been taken in the bay of Knockfergus by the 'Christopher' on Christmas eve, and carried to Dumbarton, he saw the seven French ships, and spoke to some of the crews, who said that they had brought the 'said young Garrett of Kildare,' and had put him ashore, and that he would be king of Scotland, that the said 'Christopher' had sailed thence to Strangford, where he landed, and saw the 1500, and had spoken to their captain 'James M'Connell of the out isles.' (*Domestic Correspondence, Edward VI.*, vol. iii. *History of Kildares (Marquis of Kildare)*, 1862, pp. 59-60. *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland*, 1505-73, p. 92.)

The fact that Francis seriously entertained the project of a marriage between Gerald and Mary furnishes a clear proof of the extent to which Ireland entered into French schemes.

Frenchwoman herself, no matter how much she favoured the Irish plan, was bound to second Henry's arrangement. As a result Mary Queen of Scots was conveyed to Brittany in August 1548, and soon afterwards betrothed to the Dauphin (Francis II.). At the first whisper of these plans FitzGerald's chances of securing the hand of Mary Queen of Scots vanished utterly, and he returned without delay to the French capital. It is difficult permanently to depress the spirits of the young, and a life of plots, adventures, and escapes must have steeled the character of FitzGerald to bear the blows of adversity with more than usual equanimity. None the less, twice had he been disappointed of his supreme desire of seeing his country once again. He was treated almost royally in Paris, with his own establishment, gentlemen-in-waiting, and a purse which the generous King of France used often to replenish. But Gerald was not made for the luxury and sloth of such a life. The restlessness of the born wanderer had entered his blood, and before long he wearied of the French court, and in the service of Cosmo de' Medici, where poison and the dagger were at wild work, found companions and a life more congenial to his tastes.

We must now travel back two years and narrate a part of FitzGerald's life which has not been hitherto noticed.

In the beginning of 1547, before Gerald had been allured by the roseate-coloured plans, whose failure we have just described, to come to France, he had been staying at the court of the Medici in

Florence.¹ The gorgeous retinues, the costly banquets, all the splendour of this famous city seems to have only awakened in Gerald's heart an overmastering desire to return to his native land. He was ready to make any sacrifice to attain that end, and when he chanced upon an Englishman named Young, he expressed a desire to be reconciled with the King of England—excusing his flight from Ireland on the grounds that he was then but a child and not yet of an age to be capable of discerning right from wrong. Young wrote immediately to the Lord-Protector, Somerset, asking him to pardon the young Irish lord. Somerset was only too delighted to comply with this request, because so long as FitzGerald remained abroad he would be a focus for anti-English activities.²

Accordingly Somerset practically dictated a letter to FitzGerald's mother, who was then in London, which was forwarded to her son. It was intended to strengthen Gerald's resolution of returning to his allegiance, but as an example of the private correspondence of those days it is not without interest. Somerset may have dictated its general tenor, but none the less it breathes the strong and passionate love of this Irish lady for her exiled son.³

Son, I commend me, letting you wit (know) that since your so long absence, being always desirous to hear of you, I have taken such care that never mother took

¹ Russell (*Geraldine Documents*), Stanihurst, etc.

² *Acts of Privy Council*, 1547-50, p. 264 (January 1547).

³ *Acts of Privy Council*, 1547-50, p. 540.

greater of her child. God knoweth what sorrowful days I have led and ever since and yet do still, and by what means I have studied to devise some good means for your release and comfort, and besides other essays I have sundry times since our late Sovereign Lord's death been a humble suitor to my Lord Protector, whose grace I find so good and merciful that I am well assured of your well doing if your tenderness be answerable to his goodness. I saw such great mercy and clemency shown to sundry persons of divers estate that it encouraged me to be the bolder a suitor for you, and, albeit I found my Lord Protector's grace always well affected towards you, yet now of very late, upon such report as hath been made by an English gentleman in Italy of your humble submission and good demeanour, his Grace hath given me so good words that I account myself most assured of your well doing if the fault shall not be in you yourself. Son, it cannot be excused, but yours hath been the fault, and therefore to deserve grace it must proceed of yourself, which must be to make humble demonstration of submission to the King's Majesty's mercy, whereof, if my said Lord Protector's grace might understand any agreement in you, I assure you to be received into the King's Majestie and good favour, and such estate of living as shall be honourable to you, and, therefore, good son, I pray you and charge you of my blessing that you fail not to follow my advice, showing yourself repentent for your former proceedings and desirous to be received to the King's Majestie most gracious favour, wherein when I shall perceive your gracious conformity (as I most heartily pray you I may do with all possible speed) I doubt not to find the means to send you your pardon, and besides that to devise for such stay of living for you as shall not only be to your honour and great comfort, but also to me an end of much care and sorrow, and one

of the most joyful tidings that may come to me, as knoweth the Almighty God, who send you his grace and me shortly to see you. And yet again I pray you let me hear shortly from you, if you shall not now conform yourself, I fear me I shall not hereafter be so able to help you, as now I have been but rather in suspicions for your care.¹ From, etc.

But the voice of Francis, who offered Gerald the crown of Scotland and Ireland, silenced the prudent voice of his mother and led him into the enterprise of 1547-48 whose failure we have described.

In 1549 FitzGerald is back again in France. Cardinal Pole was hatching a new conspiracy against England in which France was to take the lead. Probably he invited his kinsman—Gerald—to Paris in order to secure his services in the coming operations. The name of ‘FitzGerald’ had a charm which would rally the Irish to the French flag. But Gerald had seen so many plans for his restoration come to nothing that he was slow to involve himself in the new enterprise. Besides, he had reason to believe that England was in a chastened mood and would be likely to allow his return to Ireland provided that he kept clear of foreign conspiracies. Pressure was brought to bear on him from both sides. On the one hand the French king made tempting proposals, on the other the English ambassador promised him that he would experience the gratitude and clemency of England if he repudiated this conspiracy. Ultimately Gerald inclined to accept the English

¹ *Acts of Privy Council*, 1547-50, p. 540, etc.

offer as the shortest and surest road to Ireland.¹ These matters were fully reported by the Imperial ambassadors to the Emperor, who, no doubt, was keeping England in touch with their progress. For instance, on 5th February 1549, St. Mauris writes to the Emperor as follows:

There is a young Irish gentleman, son of one of the great Irish lords who lost their heads, in the Nuncio's household here. The Pope and the king give him a good allowance. The king hopes to set something afoot among his friends and relations that will keep the English busy.

On 5th April, writing again to the Emperor, St. Mauris goes into the matter more fully:

I informed your Majesty some time ago that an Irish gentleman at present living at this court was being solicited by the king to lead a rising in Ireland with his help, or at least to make an expedition to Scotland. He was reluctant to undertake either business. Therefore the English ambassador residing at this Court offered him a free pardon on behalf of the Protector and Council of England, assuring him he might safely return to his own kingdom and that a competence should be granted to him until such time as the King of England, coming to ripe years might decide about restoring his property to him, which was confiscated, giving an assurance that they would lend him their support in the matter. He has neither accepted or refused up to the present, and is doubtful about (the sincerity of) the offer, remembering how his people were wronged in the past, and sent to the scaffold for little or no reason. The King of France heard of the transaction and sent one of his gentlemen,

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1547-49, p. 336; also *Foreign and Domestic Calendars*.

Breton by name, to exhort the young Irishman not to yield, and to consider that his life was at stake, whereas if he should serve France he should be safe and honourably treated. If he felt unwilling to declare himself definitely against the King of England, let him make no move at all for the present.¹ On the other hand the English ambassador is pressing him hard not to engage with Francis if he ever wishes to return to England again, and the young Irishman seems wholly inclined to his side, but wishes the King of England would give him a pension to live on. This is how the business stands at present. The said Breton, who was sent to argue with him, was ordered these last few days to go to Ireland to find if there are any grounds for inciting the people to rise. He took presents from the French king to a few Irishmen. He found matters very well disposed for a future revolt, if the said Irish gentleman could be induced to join it, for he is amongst the first of the land. The English are equally well aware that could they get him to England an occasion for revolt and a cause for discontent would be removed. Both the English and the French are doing their utmost with him. Cardinal Pole would give him no definite advice. He charged him to consider well before he decided, saying that he would commend him for returning to his mother country, if he could be assured of receiving good treatment.²

In the end FitzGerald refused to throw in his lot with the French. The English, who knew that very little would suffice to send Gerald over to the enemies' camp, hastened to grant him a full pardon and permission to return to his own

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 8th April 1549. 'St. Mauris to the Emperor' (*Foreign and Domestic State Papers*).

² *Spanish Calendar*, 8th April 1549. 'St. Mauris to the Emperor.'

country. In the month of June Gerald received from the Privy Council a sum of money to defray the expenses of his return.¹ But Gerald was slow to entrust himself to the mercies of the English, for their treachery towards his family was still fresh in his memory. Finally he decided to return and take the risks. In March 1550 he was in London. It is hard to blame FitzGerald for having made terms with the English. He had been an exile for the most part of his life, and when an opportunity of returning offered itself he would have been more than human had he rejected it. In 1552 he was restored to his estates, and in 1554, after fourteen years' absence, he returned 'amidst great rejoicing' to his native land.²

¹ *Acts of Privy Council*, 1547-50 (June 1549).

² *Acts of Privy Council*, 1550-52 (March 1550, May 1551). *Carew State Papers*, 30th April 1552. *Four Masters*, 1554.

CHAPTER V

THE HOUSE OF GUISE, HENRY II., AND THE IRISH CHIEFTAINS

IN 1547 Francis I. died, relieving Europe of a sensual despot whose character had been formed in the most corrupt school of the Renaissance. His affection for Ireland may be measured by the fact that he requited the love of his own family and the tender solicitude of his gifted sister Margaret of Navarre with heartless scorn. He seems to have cared for nothing in the world but his own selfish pleasures. Even his phrases of gallantry sound false. He seems to have toyed with everything, not excepting Ireland. Of course we may take his protestations of friendship for Irishmen as the polite speeches of a diplomatist without counting them much to his discredit. But we cannot excuse the cold-blooded opportunism which made him, although a Catholic king, throw over the Papal party time and again. Ostensibly he was a member of the Catholic League, but at heart he does not seem to have recognised any established religion. All that was brilliant and cruel in the political artificiality of the sixteenth century reached its apotheosis in Francis, who was also the first French king to recognise the political importance of Ireland.

His successor Henry II. was almost his exact opposite. Few more honourable, generous, and accomplished kings have ruled France. For Ireland his accession represented the rise to power of a new and all-important movement. This was the House of Guise and the Catholics whom we have already pointed out as they moved behind the scenes planning a counter Reformation and now and then indicating to French politicians the benefits to be derived from a French conquest of Ireland. The House of Guise and its following personified the militant reaction against the Reformation. They were the Catholic product of the Renaissance—sharing in its intellectual brilliance and its moral disintegration, without its humanity or enthusiasm, but filled with its restless and fiery energies. Inasmuch as they were children of the same mother—the House of Guise and Lutheranism had much in common. But whereas the House of Guise continued to live within its Latin homelands and yielded obedience to the Church, that other child left its mother and founded in Northern Europe a new creed and other conceptions of life. Henceforth there was a deadly antipathy between these Franco-Italian and Teutonic brothers, and thus the House of Guise, like Maurice of Saxony and Martin Luther, were the chosen champions of religious war. No matter how sternly we may reprobate the vices of this Catholic party, it must be allowed that they fought the Reformation with its own weapons. Nor can the Papacy be tasked with the sinister character of its defenders.

For the Papacy had too limited a choice to be over scrupulous in its selection. The incredible ferocity which could steep France in the bloody massacres of Vassy and St. Bartholomew's and yet preserve an air of cold detachment was engendered in the House of Guise and the palaces of erudite Italian princes and not in the Catholic Church. The Renaissance had taught Catholics like the Guises and the De' Medicis, who were no longer filled with the profound faith of medieval times, to reason, and inexorable logic had told them that heretics were outlaws and should be destroyed. While the Catholics of the Renaissance were polishing the sword, the Church was vindicating its inner greatness in Spain and parts of Italy. There the rich spiritual forces of Catholicity proclaimed through the inspired voices of Cervantes, Tasso, and Calderon that the Universal Church was instinct with imperishable life.

But in politics Rome had to accept the weapons at hand, and through the Catholic League it endeavoured not only to wrench England from Protestantism but also to liberate Ireland. The foremost figures of the Catholic League, the Duke of Guise, the Cardinal of Lorraine, the Queen-Dowager of Scotland, Cardinal Pole, Strozzi, and the Bishop of Valence have already come before our notice. But the list would be utterly incomplete if we omitted to add Catherine de' Medici. Having been neglected under Francis I., this remarkable woman, on the accession of her husband Henry to the French throne, led the

Catholic party, of which she was at once the animating spirit and the avenging fury. Catherine was a pure Italian—born and bred in Florence. There are many points of similarity between her and Leonardo da Vinci. She possessed his marvellous inventive powers and perfect ease in face of the most terrible trials. She was his feminine counterpart, a woman of action, perhaps the greatest that the Italian race has produced.¹

But if there was much of the new culture in Catherine de' Medici there was infinitely more of the pagan fury and the blood lust of Sforza or Caesar Borgia. Behind the polished manners of this woman seethed the terrible passions which were only appeased by such bloody offerings as Vassy and St. Bartholomew's. She was a consummate artist in words and in all the play of diplomacy. She was almost as skilled in the use of the dagger and poison as Da Vinci was with the chisel. She executed her will in the world of affairs with the same deadly efficiency as he did in the domain of art. In her the Renaissance seems to have reached most successfully back to antiquity, for Catherine de' Medici was Medea re-born in the modern world. If any woman could claim to be Queen of the Renaissance it was she. But like many of its greatest pupils she outstripped the master, and loved not mankind but power. Madame la Serpente was the sobriquet once used

¹ *Documents inédits de l'Histoire de France. Lettres de Catherine de Médicis*, La Ferrière. *Archives curieuses de l'Histoire de France*, par M. le Cimbier et Danjou.

of Catherine de' Medici by her dutiful son—Charles IX.¹

In the hands of such a formidable woman and such a formidable party, Henry, a very amiable and easy-going king, was as plastic as wax. This Catholic party, which becomes more and more important as the century advances, was not so much concerned with Germany as with England. No doubt, Germany was the stronghold of the Reformation, but the Emperor of Austria, who inherited the theocratic empire of Charlemagne and therefore the duty of eradicating heresy, was charged with the spiritual as well as the material welfare of Germany, and viewed with the utmost suspicion any attempt to usurp his office. All the energy of the Catholic League was then directed against England, who was not only the armed champion of Protestantism but also the hereditary enemy of France. This it was that made Ireland such an important factor in Continental politics. To this League the Irish could apply for assistance with the certainty that they would get a friendly hearing. Nor could Irishmen be too scrupulous as to the methods or personality of those who befriended them on the Continent, for

¹ La Ferrière, *Lettres de Catherine de Médicis*, p. 147.

A contemporary poet was impressed by the clear latin personality of Catherine and wrote of her :

‘ Tout le cœur de noir tenture
Batu d’acier a trempe dure
Ou bien forgé de diamans.’

She was essentially a politician, but the niece of Clement VII. and a daughter of the De' Medici could not, even if she wished, escape from Catholic influences.

the sound proverbial reason 'that beggars cannot be choosers.'

By the year 1548 the Catholic party was very favourably disposed towards Ireland. Within a score of years its organisation had made vast strides.¹ The counter-Reformation was now well on its way. The Council of Trent had been held in 1545. The most advanced leaders, Caroja, Pole, Contarini, Sadoletto, had been made cardinals. The Society of Jesus had been founded and such mighty spirits as Ignatius Loyola, Faber, Xavier, Rodriguez were abroad amongst men. A decree of the Spanish Inquisition had ordered the excommunication of all who kept schismatical books, and in the year 1547 the Spanish soldiery, with the terrible cry of 'Luther, Luther,' were hammering at the gates of Germany. Sterner men and sterner measures became operative. Thus it was that the design of a French conquest of Ireland, which may have been no more than a temporary expedient for Francis I., became in the reign of Henry II. a serious object of French policy. This design on Ireland is reflected in the French policy towards Scotland. Since the arrival of Mary Stuart in France Scotland had practically ceased to have an independent government, and Henry determined that this state of things should last not only because Scotland would be an appanage of the French crown, but also because it would serve as a stepping-stone to Ireland.² There was

¹ *Correspondance diplomatique d'Odet de Selve*, 1546-48.

² Ribier, *Lettres et Mémoires d'Estat*, vol. ii. pp. 152-4, 288. *Acts of Privy Council*, 1552, pp. 113-14.

another motive which entered into the considerations of the French. There were stories current all over Europe that Ireland was rich in gold and silver mines. England was profoundly interested in them, and it was generally known that German miners had been sent for to work them. This was the age of exploration, and men were apt to regard an unknown land as a potential El Dorado. Ireland, as the most western isle in Europe, must have still possessed an aspect of mystery and allurements for Continentals. The prospect of unlimited plunder and inexhaustible gold mines—for in those days men would hardly admit the possibility of exhausting Nature's resources—no doubt was another cause of the French desire for a conquest of Ireland.¹

How far England could be expected to resist this project was the crucial question. Relations between the two countries had been going from bad to worse since the death of Francis. Not only had the French been secretly instigating civil war in England, but they had also asserted their determination to maintain Scotland and recover Boulogne. On the other hand Somerset, who was conducting the government of England in the minority of Edward VI., had renewed the claims in Scotland which he had abandoned in 1547. Both countries, therefore, were making towards a war which France had as many reasons to desire as England to dislike. England had never prospered under a regent. In the Tudor state the

¹ *Irish Calendar. Foreign Calendar. Spanish Calendar. Vide 'Mines,' Ireland.*

king was an indispensable factor without whom the machine of government was almost bound to get clogged if it did not stop working altogether. This had been the case in the minorities of Henry III., Richard II., Henry VI., and Edward V., and nowhere do events repeat themselves with such monotonous regularity as in history. In addition to all these embarrassments English resources were hardly equal to the demands of a new war. These were precisely the reasons which decided France to declare war on England in 1549. The French carried all before them at the outset, but in the long run the English checked the French advance. Conditions then became stalemate, so that it behoved France to make a diversion elsewhere, which they decided to do in Ireland.

Ireland, as usual, was ripe for rebellion. The chieftains had fought hard to stem the advancing tide of invasion, and they had been beaten down in blood. Some had accepted Henry VIII.'s policy of conciliation, and there were notable examples of treachery to demonstrate the doubtful advantages of that policy. Of late years Bellingham, an English soldier, had carried on the government of Ireland with Spartan rigour. He had suppressed the rebellions of the O'Connors and the O'Mores of Leix and Offaly, two clans who had given England continual trouble, and in words that have a Cromwellian flavour boasted that 'none (of the king's enemies) escaped but by mistake or hiding them in ambush, etc., such was the great goodness of God to deliver them into our hands.' The two chieftains were dispossessed and it was proposed

to plant their lands with English colonists. This object lesson was not lost on the other chieftains, who recognised that some day a similar fate might befall themselves. Ireland in the year 1549 was a powder magazine where a spark from France would precipitate an explosion.

The Irish chieftains hastened to appeal for foreign aid, and in the negotiations which followed they had three representatives—Dr. Wauchop, Sir George Paris, and Cormac O'Connor—a dangerous trio, and well qualified to carry through a desperate enterprise. Dr. Wauchop was a theologian deferred to throughout Christendom. He had assisted the Pope's nuncio at the Council of Worms, held in the year 1540, as consulting theologian. He was a familiar figure in chancelleries, and diplomatists who had set their wits against his declared that there were few finer or more incisive minds in Europe. In person tall and strongly built—inured to the hardships of an active life—Wauchop was at the same time almost totally blind. Add to this that he was reported one of the best horsemen of the day, and you have a character that challenges and holds the attention. He had been admitted into the friendship of Ignatius Loyola and had assisted in the foundation of the Order of the Jesuits which was yet to become the spearhead of the Catholic Church. It is to Wauchop we owe the establishment of the Jesuits in Ireland.¹ Wauchop had been born in

¹ Ware, *Annals of Ireland*, p. 58. Ware, *De Archi. Ardmac. Istoria del Concilio di Trento*, vol. ii. p. 34 (Sarpi). Sleidan. *Histoire du Conseil de Trente*. Courayer's *Notes to Sarpi*. Jewel's *Works*

Scotland and, like his famous countryman, Cardinal Beaton, was a potent figure in political affairs. The forces which made the churchman

(Parker Society), vol. ix. 905, 1056. *Spicelegium Ossoriense*, vol. i. p. 13. *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vols. xiv.-xxi. See Index. Ribier, *Mémoires d'Estat*, t. ii. p. 163.

Wauchop was a prominent figure in the history of the Reformation, and at the instance of the Pope attended the Diets of Worms, Ratisbon, and Spire, where he signalised himself by his fierce opposition to any compromise with the Reformers. He disseminated Catholic tracts throughout Germany, and was known to Luther as an inveterate enemy of all Protestant doctrines. Melancthon, the prudent counsellor who stood at Luther's right hand, characterises Wauchop as a dangerous firebrand. Coming from such quarters this was praise, for it bore witness to Wauchop's zeal in the cause of Catholicity. The Emperor Charles v. had a high opinion of Wauchop's ability, and while he sojourned in the imperial dominions showered honours and emoluments on his head. The Pope appointed him to act on the Council of Trent, where he attended eleven sessions and bore the title of Primate of the Council. When George Dowdall was appointed Bishop of Armagh by Henry VIII., the Pope countered by appointing Wauchop bishop of that see, and for the rest of his life he was employed in fighting the English Reformation. Wauchop was in the counsels of the House of Guise and Cardinal Pole, and the most cherished object of his policy was to unite France, Ireland, and Scotland in a confederacy which would beat England to her knees, and compel her to recant at the point of the sword. Into this task Wauchop threw himself without reserve. Robert Sarpi in his history of the Council of Trent says in regard to Wauchop: 'Venant (Wauchop) Écossais, archevêque d'Armagh en Irlande, qui malgré sa vue courte passait pour le meilleur homme de poste de son temps'; and Courayer in his *Notes* adds that 'Quoique presque aveugle dès l'enfance il s'applique si fort à l'étude qu'il devint Docteur en Théologie de la Faculté de Paris. Il fut Légat à Latéré en Allemagne.' Wauchop's name was almost a household name in Germany, where his activities against the Reformation gave rise to the proverb 'Legatus caecus ad oculos Germanos' — 'A blind legate to the sharp-eyed Germans.' (Ware, *Annals of Ireland*, p. 58. Ribier, *Mémoires d'Estat*, vol. ii. p. 163. *Spicelegium Ossoriense*, vol. i. p. 13. *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. xiv. part viii., 1308, 1539, and other volumes. Ware. *De Archi. Ardmac.* Brady, *Episcopal Succession.*)

a politician are inherent in the medieval system and even to the modern mind quite comprehensible. The religious order was the world order, embracing all the activities of Church and State, art and science. It was the great unity of all the energies of mankind that made the churchman also a man of affairs.

Wauchop may have represented not only the Irish chieftains but the Scottish party as well, for the Queen-Dowager of Scotland, Mary of Lorraine, was strongly in favour of French intervention in Ireland. In England Wauchop was well known as a man who had discharged numerous embassies in Germany with marked success, and also 'as a very great brewer of war and sedition' as far as they were concerned.¹ Cormac O'Connor, son of Brian O'Connor, the chieftain of Offaly, lately dispossessed, was next in importance to Wauchop. Brian O'Connor, perhaps the bravest chieftain in Ireland, had waged continual war on the English in Ireland. He was famed for his hospitality among the Irish, and the Four Masters, who give a man no more than his due meed of praise, pronounce him 'the head of the happiness and prosperity of that half of Ireland in which he lived.'²

But now the gallant old chieftain was in the hands of the English and his son Cormac left to carry on the family tradition. Described by an English official 'as a most rank and seditious

¹ Shirley, *Original Letters*, p. 59. *Irish Calendar*, 22nd March 1550.

² *Four Masters*, 1554.

traitor,'¹ Cormac will figure largely in the events of the next few years. True as steel, active and fearless, he took a leading part both in Ireland and France, and although the English were well aware that he was trading in treason they could never lay hands on him. Usually he was disguised, and in his numerous journeys to France and Scotland travelled under the assumed name Killeduff.² With natural pride Cormac was wont to declare that when all the Irish lords were accepting on bended knees the titles of England, his father, though his lands were within a stone's throw of the Pale, had never surrendered to the enemies of his country.

The third of the conspirators, Sir George Paris, was cast in a very different mould. Well educated, of good birth and easy address, he was an unscrupulous adventurer. He belonged rather to that race of men who wandered from court to court in search of novelty than to the old Irish stock settled on the soil of Ireland. His ancestors had held lands in Ireland, but they had been dispossessed, and Sir George Paris was now a man living on his wits. To him a French conquest of Ireland would have meant fame and fortune. But he was unreliable and exactly the type of man who would sell his services to the best bidder. Of such stuff are traitors made, and as events proved, Paris was the weak point in the Irish combination. For the next two years, however, he employed his undoubted talent for intrigue

¹ *Domestic Calendar, Edward VI.*, 1547-48, p. 6.

² *Irish Calendar*, 1505-73, p. 222.

in a sincere effort to secure French assistance for Ireland.¹

The first advances seem to have come from France. Henry's efforts to enlist Gerald Fitz-Gerald in his schemes have already been mentioned, and simultaneously Breton, a gentleman of the King's household, had been sent to Ireland to explore the possibilities of a rebellion. He had returned with good news, and shortly afterwards Wauchop and Sir George Paris, acting on behalf of the Irish chieftains O'Neill, O'Donnell, O'Doherty, and O'Carroll, had arrived in France and opened negotiations with Henry.² By the spring of 1549 the conspiracy, both in Ireland and France, was in full swing. The strongest supporters of the Irish enterprise were members of the Catholic League—such as Cardinal Pole, the House of Guise, the Bishop of Valence, Strozzi, Prior of Capua, and the Queen-Dowager of Scotland. Wauchop seems not only to have harmonised the Scottish and Irish policies but also to have formed the connecting link with the Papacy. Paul III., the reigning Pontiff, for political and religious reasons seems to have encouraged the Irish enterprise. He was so devoted to France, that Charles v. used to say, if his body were opened, they would find three *fleurs-de-lis* upon his heart. In early spring, 1549, Wauchop arrived in Ireland from France and set about organising a general confederation of the

¹ 'Mason to Privy Council, 16th June 1550' (*French State Papers*). Tytler. *England under Edward VI.* and Melville's *Memoirs*.

² *Spanish Calendar*, 1547-49, p. 336.

northern and southern chieftains.¹ At the same time Monluc, the Bishop of Valence, who was French ambassador in Scotland, acting on instructions received from Henry, proceeded to Ireland to meet Wauchop and arrange a Franco-Irish alliance. In the month of March Monluc, accompanied by the Marquis de Fourquevaux, a French diplomatist, Sir George Paris, and several Scottish nobles, sailed into Lough Foyle, and disembarked at one of the Irish castles on the river side. Among his retinue was a boy of fourteen, famous afterwards as Sir James Melville, who has left an amusing and instructive description of the early stages of the embassy.²

‘John de Monluc, Bishop of Orleans,’ writes Melville in his *Memoirs*, ‘was sent as Ambassador from France to the Queen Mother of Scotland, sister of the Duke of Guise, and when the said Ambassador was to return to France it pleased the Queen to send me with him to be placed page of honour with the Queen her daughter, I then being fourteen years past. But the said bishop passed first into Ireland, by commandment of the King his master’s letter, to know more particularly the motion and likelihood of the offers made by O’Neill, O’Doherty and O’Carroll, willing to cast off the yoke of England and become subject to the King of France, providing that he would procure the pope’s gift of Ireland, and then send to their help two thousand archers, two hundred light horsemen and four cannons. We shipped for

¹ *Irish Calendar*, February 1550; 22nd March 1550, also p. 92. Shirley, *Original Letters*, p. 59.

² *Irish Calendar*, March 1550. *Domestic State Papers*, March 1550. Ribier, *Mémoires d’Etat*, vol. ii. p. 1550. Sir James Melville’s *Memoirs*, pp. 1-10.

Ireland in the month of January. We were stormsted by the way at a little isle for seventeen days, and after great danger of the ship and our lives, we entered Lock Foyle in Ireland, upon Shrove Tuesday. Ere we landed we sent one George Paris, who had been sent to Scotland by the great O'Neill and his associates, who had married O'Doherty's daughter, dwelling at the side of the lake, who came to our ship and welcomed us, and conveyed us to his house, where we rested that night. The next morning O'Doherty came and conveyed us to his house, which was a great dark tower where we had cold cheer, as herring and biscuit, for it was Lent. There finding two English grey friars who had fled out of England, etc.

'Now the ambassador met in a secret part with O'Neill and his associates, and heard their offers and overtures. And the Patriarch of Ireland (Dr. Wauchop) did meet him there, who was a Scotsman born, and was blind of both his eyes, and yet had been divers times at Rome by post. He did great honour to the ambassador, and conveyed him to Patrick's purgatory which is like an old coal pit, which had taken fire by reason of the smoke which came out of the hole, etc.'

So far Melville's narrative is scrupulously accurate, Monluc arrived in Donegal in the manner described, and was received warmly by the Irish chieftains. After the usual festivities discussions commenced. Wauchop acted on behalf of the Irish chieftains and finally concluded an alliance by which the Irish bound themselves to acknowledge the sovereignty of the French king on condition that he supported them against the English to the extent of two thousand archers, two hundred light horse, and four pieces of cannon. This

would be a formidable auxiliary force, and joined to the Irish, was considered equal to the task of driving the English from Ireland.¹ The treaty having been duly ratified, a ceremony of extraordinary interest followed. In the ancestral castle of the chiefs of Tyrconnel, O'Neill and O'Donnell took an oath of fealty to the French king, and in their own names and in the names of their fellow chieftains pledged themselves to acknowledge his sovereignty.²

This passage of Franco-Irish history furnishes the most unmistakable evidence of the dissatisfaction of the Irish with English rule, and of their resolution to be done with it at all costs. Before we continue the narrative we shall attempt to fix this episode in Irish history finally and irrevocably—for it is a decisive proof of the temper of the times.

De Serigny, a French historical writer whose reputation for sound scholarship stands high, in his registry of the nobility of France, gives the following particulars in connection with the French embassy in the course of a sketch of the career of Beccarie de Pavie, Marquis de Fourquevaux :

In the meantime, as the king wished to bring the Irish princes under his dominion, and withdraw them from their allegiance to the King of England, who had

¹ Melville, *Memoirs*, pp. 1-10. *Irish Calendar*, March 1550 (*Con. History of Ireland*). It is interesting to notice that the Irish chose the French archers, since it suggests that the fame of their fighting in Italy, where they had more than once beaten the terrible Swiss infantry, had penetrated to Ireland.

² De Serigny, *Nobiliaire Universel*, r. 2, vol. iii. p. 1.

many partisans among them, and was in possession of some fortresses, he gave order to De Fourquevaux to set out for Ireland with the prothonotary De Monluc, who was the chancellor of Scotland, and afterwards bishop of Valentia and Die in Dauphiny. Notwithstanding the delicacy of this affair, they carried on the negotiation, which was a difficult one, with so much skill and dexterity that, in the month of February 1549,¹ they received the oath of fidelity from Prince O'Donnell and O'Neill, earl of Tyrone, in the castle of Donegal, province of Ulster, which princes both in their name, and in the names of the other lords of the country, placed their lives, forces, and properties under the protection of France, it having been agreed upon, that whoever would be king of France would be also king of Ireland.

No doubts can exist as to the authenticity of this document, which sums up the substance of the treaty between Ireland and France in the sentence 'that whoever would be king of France would be also king of Ireland.' The biographer of Beccarie de Pavie, who had access to the contemporary sources of information, confirms the foregoing account in its entirety and declares that the Latin transcript of the oath taken by the Irish lords is still extant in the King's treasury. Next to nothing is known about the circumstances which attended the conclusion of the treaty—were there festivities?—were the negotiations carried on openly or in secret?—these are things which lie hidden behind a barrier of three centuries. One thing, however, is certain—that the Irish lords

¹ De Serigny fixes the date of this ceremony as 'February 1553,' which is evidently an error.

entered into an alliance with France and swore fealty to the French king. Sovereignty, under the circumstances, could only mean suzerainty to the Irish chieftains. It is a mistake to read the idea of monarchical authority into the minds of men who had not yet emerged from the feudal order. The divine right of kings was a conception which the Irish would have found difficult to comprehend and would certainly have rejected. Even in England, where the State was omnipotent, a few years later was seen the strange spectacle of a Spanish king, Philip, seated on the English throne. The Irish might have accepted a member of the French royal family as their king, but never would they have abrogated a particle of national independence. This alliance, therefore, was loose and only operated for the benefit of both parties. If the Irish did not consider themselves tied down to hard-and-fast conditions, the French, as the future showed, were in precisely the same frame of mind. Probably France wished to exploit Irish politics to her own advantage. The age was not remarkable for altruism nor indeed any virtue. An age in which the Borgias and Machiavelli flourished was scarcely conducive to knight-errantry. Candid wickedness was the prevailing note. The relationship of Ireland and France for the next twenty years is a simple one—France was to assist Ireland, but, if expedient, would desert her. We may be confident that had it not been for the Catholic party the Irish would on many occasions have been treated with scant courtesy by the French.

To return to the final stages of the negotiation, before Monluc set out for France another important step was taken. When in Scotland he had sounded the Scottish nobility on the subject of a league with Ireland, and his suggestion had been so well received that now he was able to effect an alliance between M'Connell, Lord of the Isles, and the Irish chieftains.¹ At last Monluc's fondest hopes had been realised. Ireland, Scotland, and France stood united in a close confederacy against England. Assailed at once from those three points, English power would certainly be borne to the earth. Then he visited O'Doherty, who vowed that he would never rest until the English power in Ireland had been destroyed, and as earnest of his determination put three castles on Inishowen at the disposal of the French. Accordingly they threw most of their men and artillery into those fortresses.

Three weeks passed before the French embassy took its final departure. Then one of M'Connell's ships brought Monluc and his companions to Scot-

¹ Melville's *Memoirs*, pp. 1-10. *Irish Calendar*, 1509-73; 26th March 1849, etc. 'Earl of Tyrone to George Dowdall' (106, 107).

The news sped quickly to the French court, and on 7th April 1549, Von der Delft, an Imperial agent in Paris, mentions in the course of a despatch to the Emperor, 'Some people assert (the Irish) that they have some understanding with the Scots, who, as I learn, from a close confidant of the Scottish ambassadors still here, are thinking more of carrying on the war than of peace. They (the Irish) are expecting in two or three months to have good certainty of aid from France. This was said after the arrival here of Sieur de Villeville, who has been sent hither by the King of France, and yesterday after being feasted at Court, went with the French ambassador to see the king.' (*Calendar of Spanish State Papers*, 1547-49, p. 90.)

land, whence they passed to France to report to Henry the complete success of the Irish negotiation. We will leave Melville to tell the story of the journey in his own words. He was then a child at the most impressionable age, and those scenes seem to have been a vivid and detailed remembrance with him.

From O'Doherty's house we went to the dwelling-place of the Bishop of Ray, not far from the narrow firth that runs from through Lochfoyle to the sea, the said bishop had been also at Rome, and there we rested, tarrying on a highland bark which James MacConnell should have sent from Kiltyre with his brother Angus to carry us back to Dumbarton, which being come for us, we parted to a castle which MacConnell had in Ireland, and from that we embarked and rested in the isle of Jura, and the next night in the isle of Bute. But by the way we broke our rudder and were in great peril of drowning. But Angus after he had taken down the sail said we are safe, and we had drowned were it not for what he had done. When we came to Kiltyre James MacConnell treated us honourably and said the bishop was the welcomer for my sake being kindly treated by my father when he was warded in the castle of Dunbar during the time that my father was captain thereof, of whom he made an honourable report to the said bishop, occasion that I was in the future the better treated, for the bishop said he believed to have been rather welcome for that he was recommended by the Queen-Dowager as ambassador to the King of France.

Always MacConnell would have me to sit at the head of the table. After he had caused us to be landed at Dumbarton, by his said brother Angus, we rode to Stirling, where after eight days the ambassador took his leave

of the Queen and rode again to Dumbarton¹ where there were two French ships (that had brought silver to Scotland to pay the French soldiers) ready to receive us. So sailing by the isle of Man and along the South coast of Ireland, we landed at Corquet in Brittany eight days after our embarking, not without some dangers by the way both of English ships and a great storm, so that once at midnight the mariners cried we were all lost. At Brest in Brittany the bishop took post for the court of France, which was in Paris for the time.

A voyage to Ireland was considered such an adventure that Monluc was welcomed in court as if he had barely escaped with his life. The Queen-Dowager of Scotland thought so highly of his conduct in taking the terrible risks which were supposed to be involved in a voyage so far west as Ireland that she wrote to her brother—the Duc d'Aumale—recommending Monluc to his favour. The letter runs as follows :

*The Queen-Dowager of Scotland to her Brother the
Duc d'Aumale*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I will not enlarge on M. de Monluc's journey to Ireland, as he himself can give you full particulars, other than to say that here they never expected to see him again. But he did return, having accomplished his purpose, and likewise M. de Fourquevaux. He will let you know exactly how matters stand and the excellent prospects there are of expelling the enemy, etc.²

In France they proceeded to organise an expedition for Ireland. Wauchop remained in Ireland

¹ Melville, *Memoirs*, pp. 1-10.

² Teulet, *Pièces et Documents inédits relatifs à l'Histoire de France et de l'Écosse*, vol. i. p. 716 (Appendix).

working among the chieftains and preparing the way for the French, who were expected to land in the spring of 1550. However, in spite of all precautions, the news of what was afoot in Ireland reached the English authorities in spring 1549. Con O'Neill, who had been deep in all the intrigues, was bribed to give information. And later he actually handed over to the English authorities the correspondence he had received from the French king. Immediately the Lord-Justice of Ireland wrote to the English Privy Council 'how this George Paris hath been as appeareth by the said letters enclosed (French letters), with the French king, was his chief man, with whom now the said O'Connor's son Cormac has joined both to explore the French and Scots intention of expelling all Englishmen out of this realm.'¹ Somewhat later Con O'Neill gives George Dowdall, the Protestant Bishop of Armagh, additional information regarding Wauchop, the French ambassadors, and the Scottish alliance with the Irish chieftains: 'The blind doctor who calls himself Primate, came lately with certain French noblemen who brought him letters from the French king. They conferred many gifts on James M'Connell (the Lord of the Isles) on gaining his alliance,' etc.²

At first the intimation that a French invasion of Ireland was imminent threw the authorities into great alarm. But after the surprise had

¹ 20th March 1549. *Irish State Papers*, 1509-73.

² 'Earl of Tyrone to George Dowdall' (*Irish State Papers*, 20th March 1549). Shirley, *Original Papers*.

worn away they set to work with commendable energy. On the one hand, they instructed the Irish Government to leave no stone unturned for the disruption of the Irish confederation. On the other hand, they took steps to have the Irish fortresses strengthened and prepared a fleet to repel the invasion on sea.

The Irish Government wrote to the northern chieftains warning them against rebellion in tones which veiled at once threats and entreaties. The letter addressed to Tyrone is a good sample of the propaganda now carried on by the Government amongst the Irish chieftains. The Lord-Chancellor and Council were the authors of this document in which they contrasted the blessings of English rule with the severity of French domination. They instanced the cold-blooded manner in which the French had behaved in Sicily, and characterised the French nobility as fierce, proud, and rapacious in comparison with whom the Turks were mild barbarians. O'Donnell was also lectured on his duty to the English Government, but this chieftain, while he professed loyalty, continued to act in all good faith with the conspirators. He actually promised the Lord-Deputy to expel Wauchop from the north at a time when he was in collusion with this bishop as to the best means of driving the English from Ireland. O'Donnell's conduct was a miracle of duplicity which certainly was calculated to lull the English into a false sense of security. All the other chieftains who had their hands to the plough did not intend to turn back. Besides, they knew that the arm of

the Government could not reach to their fortresses. Early in 1550 the English Government perceived that the situation in Ireland was fast growing more serious. Lord-Chancellor Alen wrote in early spring that there were great combinations of the wild (native) Irish, and a little later the Lord-Deputy informed the Protector that affairs had reached a dangerous pass. Warwick, who controlled the government of England, had already communicated his anxieties regarding Ireland to the young king, Edward VI., and the latter records in his diary the steps which were taken to prevent Ireland from falling into the hands of the French. It must be said that the English did everything possible to maintain their hold in Ireland. Lord Cobham was appointed Lord-Deputy, the forces of the crown were augmented, fleets sent to patrol the Irish coasts, mechanics and engineers were ordered to proceed to Ireland and examine the mouths of the great bays with a view to the creation of forts. The danger in Ireland was considered so pressing as to engage a great deal of the young king's attention, and in January 1550 Edward records in his diary¹ that 'There was appointed, for because, the Frenchmen did go about practice in Ireland, that there should be prepared four ships, four barks, four pinesses, twelve vitelors, to take three havens of which two were on the south side towards France, and one in the Scots country, and also to send and break the foresaid conspiracies.' A contemporary writer enters into great detail as to the precautionary

¹ *Journal of Edward VI.*, p. 300.

measures taken by the English Government in the month of January 1550¹:

Great fears were now upon good intelligence conceived, concerning the realm of Ireland, lest it should be betrayed the French practicing that way. So that the king proposed to send forces speedily thither, and to put that place into a posture of defence. And for that end he wrote five letters in the month of January, to as many persons of chiefest eminency in that kingdom, importing that, whereas the King's Majesty purposed this spring-time to send an army into Ireland, they should put themselves and their men, as well those that were under their rule by their offices, as also their household servants and tenants, in a readiness to such a number of horsemen and footmen, as they might conveniently, and to be in a readiness against the day of attack. And likewise, that they should make their repair to the king to understand his further pleasures, and also to certify the number of said horsemen and footmen forthwith, and how many should be demilances, and how many light horsemen.²

We may take it that the foregoing extract indicates with some approach to accuracy the letters written by Edward in January. Unfortunately the originals are nowhere to be found, and it does not seem likely will ever be discovered. A month later, definite news having reached London that the French were on the point of invading Ireland, Edward hurries on the preparations for defence, and an entry in his diary states³ 'upon considera-

¹ Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. ii. part i. p. 435.

² Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. ii. part i. p. 435. *Journal of Edward VI.*, p. 302.

³ *Journal of Edward VI.*, February 1550.

tion that the French king maketh great preparation of war by sea, especially in Brittany, and that he hath already Scotland in his possession, being thought on the soundest information he means to invade Ireland, it was resolved that preparations to resist should be made both by land and sea, and by the King's own election Lord Cobham appointed Lieutenant-General of Ireland,' etc. At the same time the acting Lord-Deputy,¹ Antony St. Leger, was ordered to march southwards in order to show the Irish the strength of the Government. Sir James Crofts was likewise commissioned to fortify the towns of Waterford, Cork, and Kinsale.² Many more details are to be found in a contemporary account which is worth quoting ³:

Great jealousies were now of the French making disturbances both in Scotland and Ireland. Sir James Crofts a good soldier was sent thither in February (1550) to look after the condition of that kingdom, and especially the havens to prevent any invasion and begin some good fortifications. And he arrived in Waterford next month, where the Deputy was, having lately repaired to the South parts with his forces to watch the French. Four letters were sent at this time, one to the Earl of Desmond and other three to other persons of credit, for the said Sir James Crofts, knight, sent hither to view certain ports, havens, and other places, which certain the king's enemies intended to invade there, and to report of the commodities upon the loss thereof. And a fleet of ships was

¹ *Journal of Edward VI.*, p. 302.

² *Journal of Edward VI. (Council Book)*, 23rd February.

³ Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. ii. part i. p. 441. *Council Book*, 23rd February.

sent forth for the defence of that realm, and to guarding some havens on the south side towards France.¹

While Ireland was resounding with the preparations for battle France had well-nigh completed like arrangements for the invasion. The mobilisation of troops and the equipment of a fleet had been pressed on with alacrity, for the French were now fully alive to the fact that in the reduction of England Ireland was an essential factor, for in Ireland alone could they count upon a national uprising. By the early spring a large army was encamped around Brest, and in the harbour a fleet of one hundred and sixty sail lay at anchor. In March M. d'Estrees, 'the Master of the Ordnance,' personally supervised the shipment of artillery and munitions. A few days later the French fleet, bearing the invading force destined for Ireland, slipped the cable, and favouring winds soon brought it within sight of the Irish coast.² As in the attempt of Wolfe Tone, the fate of Ireland hung literally in the wind. But as the French soldiers were preparing to disembark a terrible storm broke in which sixteen of the largest ships were lost and the rest blown back to Scotland.³ Had a few thousand Frenchmen landed there can be no doubt that English dominion would have

¹ Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. ii. part i. p. 435. *Journal of Edward VI.*, p. 302.

² *Journal of Edward VI.*, p. 307. Ribier, *Mémoires d'Etat*, March 1550.

³ *Journal of Edward VI. (Council Book)*, February 1550. *Irish Calendar*, 1505-73 (22nd March 1550 to 4th April 1550). 'George Dowdall, Primate of Armagh, to Sir John Alen.' *Foreign Calendars*, 18th March 1550. *Journal of Edward VI.*, p. 300.

vanished in a week. In Scotland the French set about reconstituting a fleet, for though their first repulse must have been a sore disappointment, the main portion of the invading force was intact, and Henry was still bent on conquering Ireland at one great stroke.

In England they were well aware how narrowly the invasion of Ireland had been averted, and they had reason to consider the danger still very pressing. On 22nd March Dowdall, the Protestant Archbishop of Armagh, informed the authorities in Dublin that 'there was an army of Frenchmen in Scotland ready to land in Ireland.' They have thirty-six ships with as many Scots and Scottish ships. But new elements were now to enter and completely transform the situation.¹

¹ *Irish Calendar*, 22nd March 1550. Irish MSS., Record Office, London.

CHAPTER VI

THE IRISH AT THE COURT OF HENRY II

THE first French expedition in Irish history had been checkmated by the winds when within sight of the Irish coast. But the main body of the invading army was safe and sound in Scotland. Why, then, did not this force, which could have procured a new fleet of transport vessels without any great difficulty, 'leap the ditch' and accomplish the liberation of Ireland? The answer to this question involves a discussion on the state of European politics.

By the year 1550 a mighty change had come over the outlook of states and kings—a change for which Machiavelli and the Reformation must be made largely responsible. The Reformation had emancipated the conscience of kings from the Pope, and those rulers who had denied his moral authority discovered in Machiavelli's *Prince* a new and accommodating gospel. Machiavelli preached in this book a non-moral virtue. Like Von Bernhardi and other absolutists he made the end justify the means—and rulers only sinned when they failed. Catholic nations, like France, were as apt disciples of the new political teaching and as thoroughly debauched by the ideas of the fertile Italian thinker as the most rabid of

‘Lutheran’ states. Opportunism, untroubled by any scruples of conscience, therefore, dictated the policy of France in common with most European States.

In brief the policy of France in the year 1550 was to incite the Protestants in Germany and the Turks in Russia to attack the Empire. Then while the Empire was fighting for its life against Turk and heretic, France would advance against an isolated England, wrench Calais from her grasp, and carry out an invasion of Ireland. But in the year 1550 the Turk betrayed no inclination to leave the Seraglio, and the Lutheran was singing hymns in praise of peace and not of war. The Empire, on the other hand, was preparing to spring on France, and in virtue of the fact that peace reigned universal throughout its dominions, would have marshalled its immense and far-famed hosts within the year. At this moment England came forward with the most tempting peace proposals, and the question was whether France would gain more by a continuance of the war. But the extreme weakness of England promised such an easy and profitable victory that Henry, while keeping up a pretence of negotiating, proceeded to strengthen his hold on Scotland, to plan an attack on Boulogne, and to press on the preparations for invading Ireland. But fortune was against France. A storm, as we have seen, frustrated the attempt on Ireland, and the other schemes were equally unsuccessful.

Notwithstanding, the situation was still rich in possibilities for France. England was ready to

pay almost any price for peace, but then England was so enfeebled that the French were confident a few strokes of the sword would reduce her to absolute submission. On the other hand, there was a possibility that the Emperor might intervene at any moment and that France would be robbed of the fruits of victory. For some time France wavered between peace and war—the dilemma was a perplexing one, but ultimately it was resolved by such an unaccountable event as the election of a pope.

In the month of December Clement had died, and in the month of February Henry decided to hold his hand and wait for the election of the new pope, an event upon which all Europe was waiting in tense excitement. Though it was a far cry to Canossa, even in the sixteenth century the Turk, the Lutheran, the Calvinist, equally with the Catholic, regarded the election of a pope as an event of supreme moment in European affairs. If a French partisan were elected the enemies of the Empire in Germany and Italy would have recourse to the sword, and while the Emperor was fighting with both hands, then the golden opportunity would have come for Henry. He would slip the French armies from the leash, attack Calais and Boulogne, and carry through an invasion of Ireland. If the new pope was favourable to France the ‘Irish expedition,’ which was temporarily suspended, would be instantly set in motion.

The eyes of all Europe turned towards Rome; thither all the cardinals from France, Spain, and

the Empire hurried, and soon in this universal melting-pot all the policies of Europe were simmering furiously. France was set against the Empire, and in the duel of wits which went on behind closed doors Cardinal Farnese and the Imperialists outmanœuvred the French, and finally carried the day. Giovanmaria del Monte, formerly tutor to the Cardinal and his brother, ascended the Papal chair as Julius III.¹ For a time the new Pope kept his counsel, no one could say positively with whom his sympathies lay, and some of the French churchmen were so pleased with this omen as to report to Henry that the new pope was secretly inclined towards France.²

What Henry II. regarded as the golden opportunity had come, and he was not slow to seize it. Boulogne and Calais were to be instantly attacked and the forces in Scotland sent into Ireland. Speed and audacity would carry off those rich prizes before England had done dozing. Soon all Paris was ringing with the rumours of these plans, and the ante-rooms of the royal palace crowded with Scottish and Irish noblemen, who came to obtain commissions in the new campaign.³ But this joyous activity was of short duration, for the fair prospect was completely overclouded by the intelligence that the new Pope, so far from inclining to the French side, had lavished dignities and honours on the Imperialist

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, pp. 1-30.

² *Papiers d'État du Cardinal de Granvelle*.

³ *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53.

Cardinals, and had met all the approaches of the French with distant and icy demeanour. This boded ill for the influence of France at the Curia. Neither had Austria scored a decisive victory. While the French and Austrians were quarrelling, the House of Farnese had carried off the prize. The success of Giovanmaria del Monte was a victory for the House of Farnese. Men of experience predicted that the Papal policy would now consist in deft opportunism, by which the great European states would be set at variance, and in this system of calculated antagonism the Papacy would hold the balance of power.¹

Had the tiara chanced to be placed on a head with French sympathies it is almost certain that a French fleet would have shaped its course for Ireland, thousands of highly-trained French soldiers would have crossed over from Scotland, with the inevitable result that English domination would have vanished in a month, and the history of this country and perhaps of the world would have been different.

The immediate consequence of the Papal election was that France decided to come to terms with England. Reluctantly did Henry II. abandon his most cherished plans—the seizure of Boulogne and Calais, and the invasion of Ireland. ‘Looking melancholy and angry,’ he had to admit the force of the arguments which counselled peace

¹ *Papiers d'État du Cardinal de Granvelle. Spanish Calendar, 1550-1552, pp. 1, 4, 15, 33, 53, 54. Foreign Calendar, 1547-53 (January, February, March 1550). Ribier, Mémoires d'État, vol. ii., January to April. Origines politiques des Guerres de Religion, vol. i., January to July 1550.*

with England. The negotiations had been going forward for some months, and now that France had no choice in the matter were quickly brought to a conclusion. Boulogne was sold to France for 400,000 crowns, and hostages were exchanged for the fulfilment of the conditions.¹ The Irish emissaries must have watched with attentive gaze every step in the progress of events. Once a new pope had declared himself against France the wiser heads among them must have foreseen that peace with England was a foregone conclusion. Nevertheless the news that France had concluded peace with England must have been a heavy blow to the majority of the Irish chieftains, but events which will engage our attention soon showed that the blow was somewhat tempered, for if Henry made peace with England he did not intend to abandon the Irish enterprise.

In the twentieth century we find it hard to conceive the uncertainty which existed in the sixteenth with regard to the delimitation of frontiers and the relations between countries supposed to be on good terms. Two nations at peace with one another could legitimately carry on an underhand war, and almost every European nation availed itself of this convention to taste surreptitiously the pleasures of plotting and plundering. Henry of France, although he had just concluded peace with England, resumed his intrigues with

¹ *Journal of Edward VI.*, January 1550. (Guidotti, a Florentine banker resident at Southampton, opened negotiations with the Constable of France in the month of January.) *Acts of Privy Council*, 1550-52, pp. 5-15. *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53. *Mémoires du Duc de Guise*, pp. 29, 36, 40. *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, pp. 46, 53, 73.

the Irish, whose cause he espoused more warmly than ever, because in the course of the peace negotiations he had detected that English energies were practically paralysed.

In 1550 England had almost become a French feudatory and Henry openly boasted that he had absolute disposal of the English king, his subjects, and resources, and that England, Ireland, and Scotland might be regarded as a part of the French dominions. The English ambassador in Paris wrote home bitter complaints of French arrogance, but the Government—weak beyond recovery—did not show even a spark of proper pride.¹ Henry was all the more convinced by this poor-spirited exhibition on the part of England that he could pursue his Irish designs with impunity, and the Irish themselves, quick to read the signals, chose this moment to renew their offers and pledge their allegiance to France. As before, Sir George Paris was the principal Irish agent, and his activities in Paris in conjunction with the nuncio and the Scots caused the English ambassador in Paris, Sir John Mason, the utmost anxiety. Mason was one of the ablest diplomatists in the English service. He had worked in Italy, where, according to a contemporary, ‘he showed as great a reach in countermining as the inhabitants did in managing their plots.’ He had plenty of spies to keep him well informed of everything that went on at the French court, and, as he con-

¹ *Journal of Edward VI.*, p. 300. *Foreign Calendar State Papers*, 1547-53, pp. 60-62, 63. Tytler, *England under Edward VI. and Mary*, vol. i. pp. 290-91. *Mémoires du Duc de Guise*, 1550, pp. 28, 29, 36, 40.

sidered the Irish design very dangerous and pressing, he presented the fullest reports on all its ramifications to the authorities in London.¹

In June 1550 Mason informed the Council that Paris was busy again in the French court and that, to all appearances, a plot was being hatched with the concurrence of Henry. He protested against these schemes, but Henry returned an answer which did not satisfy Mason. His conversation with Henry is illuminating, and in the course of this report other interesting particulars are brought to light.

Sir John Mason to the Council ²

14th June 1550.

It chanced me three or four days past, to know by secret intelligence that there arrived at this court one George Paris, sent from M'William out of Ireland with letters of credence. This Paris was a gentleman of the English Pale, whose father or brother was executed for treason, and therefore seemeth he to seek all the mean he can to annoy the king and the realm. And for that purpose this time of the wars, he hath been a common post between the wild Irish and the French. Had intelligence further that one Monsieur de Botte—a Breton, should be

¹ His letters have been published in the *Spanish and Foreign State Papers*, but they are so abridged as to be little better than a catalogue. Fortunately they have been published *in extenso* in 'Tytler's.' In this way we are enabled to present them here in a complete form. As a rule, Mason's despatches are well informed and accurate. *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52. Lloyd, p. 211. Tytler, *England under Edward VI. and Mary*, vol. i.

² *Foreign Calendar*, Paris, 14th June 1550, p. 48. Tytler, *England under Edward VI. and Mary*, vol. i., 14th June 1550.

sent from hence to Ireland, disguised in merchant's apparel, either since Easter or not much before.

I thought good somewhat to say here to the French king, and, therefore, after I had received his answer touching my first matter, Sir, quoth I, I have another thing to say to you from my Master, rather to declare his frank mind to communicate to you whatsoever he heareth, than that he had any great belief therein. He is advertised divers ways out of Ireland, that there are yet practices continued between you and the Irish, and that not long since there was sent from hence a messenger thither, and that very likely is come from them another, whom, and whose name, his Highness knoweth very well, who is thought to be at this time or will be within a day or two, in this Court. My Master's trust is, if any such messenger either come or shall come unto you you will consider the Irishmen to be his lawful subjects, and that therefore you will not by any means animate them to forget their duties of obedience, but rather declare unto them the strait amity that is between you and him, and to advise them to remember their allegiance, which if they should not do, you would not fail if need were, to assist your good brother against them. And, this doing, you shall do the part of a friend and of a prudent king, being an ill example to your own subjects to see the subjects of another prince maintained in rebellion, which if the king my master had not considered, as it behoved a prince of virtue, there was a time when he lacked not succours to your disadvantage in the like case, but he well weighed how unhonourable it was—yea, and dangerous—to give courage to the subjects against the prince, and therefore dismissed he them in such a sort as small comfort had they to return.

Here he cut my tale, and told me that, indeed, in time of war he did the best he could by all means to annoy his

enemy, and for that purpose had he entered a practice with the Irish, which, immediately, upon the peace concluded, he brake off and revoked from them such ministers as he had sent thither for that effect, and since that time he would never hearken to them. Truth it was, he could not deny but messages hath he had from them not long since, but to whom he had given such an answer as he thought they had small cause to make any boast thereof, assuring the King, his good brother, that he would neither in that matter, neither in any other thing otherwise use himself but as appertained to the straitness of the amity between them. I would no further wade with him, and yet am I well assured that the said Paris was on Monday last at the Court being appointed that day to have audience.

Mason had good reason to express his distrust of Henry, for, scarcely was his back turned, when the French king called the Irish agents to his presence and gave them every encouragement. Paris, on behalf of the Irish chieftains, laid the Irish case before Henry. He related the tale of England's sins against Ireland and declared that the existence and possessions of most of the Irish nobility were seriously menaced by English power, and that, unless France came to their rescue, like the O'Mores and O'Connors, they would be beggared and outlawed. Henry declared plainly that he would give them military assistance as soon as he possibly could, and Paris was so elated that after the audience he made no attempts at concealment, but publicly asserted that all Ireland was united in the determination to 'rid themselves from the yoke of England' and that with

the help of God and France they would succeed.¹ Shortly afterwards Wauchop left Paris, and general excitement was aroused when it became known that Henry was sending him to Rome to effect a transfer of the Pope's rights over Ireland to France. There was a general idea in those days that the Pope had the disposal of Ireland, and that English rights, in so far as they were legitimate at all, had their origin in the Bull of Adrian IV. The Irish design was generally discussed at court, and was considered of sufficient importance by the Imperial ambassador to be communicated to the Emperor. It would not have suited Imperial purposes if Ireland as well as Scotland were to fall into French hands. England was too useful a makeweight against French power.²

All these happenings were known to Sir John Mason and affected him so grievously that he went straight to the Constable of France and made bitter complaints against Sir George Paris. The Constable assured him, in terms that were palpably insincere, that he need fear nothing, and that the Irish would get short shrift from his master. Fuming with rage Mason departed, and soon afterwards his fears were strongly confirmed by the news that the Bishop of Valence—Jean de Monluc—had been in the company of George

¹ *Foreign Calendar*, 29th June 1550. Tytler, *England under Edward VI. and Mary*.

² *Spanish Calendar*, 17th September 1550. *Papiers d'État du Cardinal de Granvelle*, 1550-52 (June 1550). *Foreign Calendar*, 1551, pp. 72, 82.

Paris. His venom finally discharged itself in a report to England where he aired his views on Ireland. 'Hunt down those Irish wild beasts' was his advice.¹ It is worth pondering on this phrase if we wish to gain an insight into the Tudor mentality and the Tudor methods in Ireland. It is a phrase with which every generation of Irishmen are familiar, for it is common in the mouths of those who think that they are men of iron when they are merely barbarians. Mason's despatch to the Council on the 29th June 1550 will repay a careful reading.

Sir John Mason to the Council ²

29th June 1550.

I have been again in hand with him (Henry II.) touching Ireland, being moved thereunto by the bragging of the party who I wrote in my last letters was lately arrived from Ireland, with letters from One MacWilliam and sundry others, who letteth not to say to such as resort unto him, that the whole nobility of Ireland, from the highest to the noblest, had conspired to rid themselves from the yoke of England and that it was time for them so to do, for otherwise, by little and little, they looked for none other but to be driven out of their ancient possessions, one after the other, in such sort as had lately been served to O'More and O'Connor, and, finally he boasteth that he hath desired of the French king the castle of Trim, with the appurtenances, in recompense of his other lands and possessions taken from him by the English. His (the Constable's) answer touching

¹ *Foreign Calendar*, 1847-53, p. 88 (vide *Domestic Calendar*). Tytler, *England under Edward and Elizabeth*, vol. i.

² Tytler, *England under Edward and Elizabeth*, vol. i.

this matter is still after one sort, which is, that indeed the Irishmen had succour at their hands, but have a plain answer that none they get, but, contrarywise, were advised to keep themselves quiet and knowledge their obedience. And as for this last messenger, he told me he had been sick, otherwise he had before this time been sent away with such answer as he thought he would not gladly return with any such commission. What trust may be given to these sayings, it will not be long but deeds will declare.

Monluc was within these two days with the said messenger, named George Paris, and presented him fifty crowns, to help him in his sickness. Whether it be of himself, or from the king I cannot yet learn. But once there is in this court much talk of Ireland, and there should seem some stir worthy to be looked into. If it so be, I doubt not but your Lordships will in time provide therefore, to the intent the world may perceive neither foresight, courage, nor ability to lack. We have, these many years past, wasted there great sums of money by piecemeal, which, if it had been spent together, might have perhaps bred more quietness than we have at this present. These wild beasts would be hunted aforce, and at the beginning should so be bearded, before the whole herd run together, as they might know with whom they had to do, wherein the old and necessary policy hath been to keep them by all means possible at war among themselves.

The French now put Ireland in the forefront of their political programme, and set about devising ways and means of coming to her assistance. But before any decisive step was taken Le Botte, more commonly known as 'Le Beau Breton,' was again sent to Ireland to investigate the

situation.¹ It was clear that the French had no intention of acting precipitately and would do nothing in Ireland unless it redounded very much to their own advantage. During the summer of 1550 Le Botte pursued his inquiries in Leinster and Munster, interviewed many of the chieftains, and generally looked into national resources. In the month of October he was back in Paris with the report that Desmond, the most powerful of the Irish chiefs, was ready to draw the sword against the English, and that for a certainty a general rising would follow the French invasion. This was encouraging news, in view of which the French practically decided to fix the invasion for the following spring (1551).²

The Irish were now to receive a new accession of strength from the Franco-Scottish party. From 1549-52 the policy of France was in great measure to relinquish her schemes on the Continent in order to concentrate upon the British Isles. Ireland had been one object of this policy, Scotland was the other.

Mary of Guise, wife of the late King of Scotland, James v., since 1542 had exerted all her powers to make Scotland a French fief. In 1548 her infant daughter, Mary Queen of Scots, was carried off to Brittany, where she was zealously guarded as the future bride of the Dauphin. This child was

¹ Le Botte had been in Ireland on two former occasions, once in 1549, and once in 1580.

² *Foreign Calendar*, 17th October 1550, p. 58 (vide *Domestic Calendar*, vide under Paris). Gachard, *Voyage des Souverains des Pays-Bas*. Appendix to vol. iv.

to be the link by which France and Scotland would be permanently united. But from her birth Mary Queen of Scots had been subject to alarming attacks of weakness, and as her mother knew that death was no respecter of persons she resolved so to strengthen the French hold on Scotland that even if her daughter died it would not pass out of French control. This was all the more necessary because those next in succession were not well disposed towards France, and, in fact, the most powerful of the claimants to the crown—the Earl of Arran, head of the Hamilton family—had decided leanings towards England. It was imperative, therefore, for Mary of Guise to devise some plan by which the Earl of Arran should be reduced to a political nullity. Under her leadership a formidable party—made up of the French and Catholic forces, fused by a fierce nationalism—took the offensive and easily routed the enemies of France. Mary herself secured the regency in place of Arran, who received the French duchy of Châtellherault as compensation. The Great Seal of Scotland was given to Ponbay, a Frenchman, and D'Oisel, the French ambassador, became Mary's prime minister. All the chief fortresses except Edinburgh were garrisoned with French troops, and Scotland became virtually a feudatory of France. However, the thoroughness with which Mary had consolidated French power in Scotland provoked a reaction which, in combination with the rapid growth of reforming tendencies, threatened to undo the work of the last decade. Seeing this, and knowing that she

could not expect security until the last vestiges of resistance to France had been destroyed, Mary of Guise applied for aid to France. She strongly advocated war with England in the belief that the Arran party and all those who looked to England would be swamped in floods of racial hatred. For in the mid-sixteenth century it was true that the Scots hated England 'as an enemy on the watch to make them slaves.'¹ With this end in view Mary of Guise entered into correspondence with the French court and despatched agents to second the Irish in their efforts to induce Henry to make war on England. They pointed out to Henry that by a war with England not only would he consolidate his power in Scotland but also that another result would be the acquisition of Ireland. During the summer and autumn of 1550 the Scots crowded to the French court and, much to the indignation of Sir John Mason, united with the Irish in publicly denouncing England and prophesying her imminent destruction. Another fact that Mason noted with alarm was the interest which the Scots took in Le Botte after his return from Ireland. Altogether he was greatly disturbed to see them hand-in-glove with the Guise and Irish party, which, to his mind, augured badly for the future. Erskine, the Scottish ambassador in Paris, was particularly conspicuous in his

¹ *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53 (June to December 1550, January to May 1551). Teulet, *Documents et Pièces inédits de l'Histoire de l'Écosse*, vol. i. 1550-51. Sadler, *State Papers*, vol. ii. 1550-51. Tytler, *History of Scotland*, vol. vi. pp. 52-80. *Mémoires du Duc de Guise*, pp. 2, 3, 6, 7, 28, 43, 44.

attentions to the Irish, and Sir John Mason noted as a significant fact that he was one of those who had called on Le Botte shortly after his return from Ireland.¹

Meanwhile Mary of Guise was offering a determined resistance to the Earl of Arran in Scotland, but as the year advanced and there was yet no sign of France making war, she decided to go to Paris and lay her case before Henry. Accordingly Mary of Guise, accompanied by De Thermes, La Chapelle, and other French officers, and by some of the principal nobility of Scotland, landed at Dieppe on the 19th of November. Thence they proceeded to Rouen, where the court was sitting, and were received with the highest marks of distinction. While the courtiers were honouring their visitors in feast and pageant, Mary of Guise, in conjunction with her brothers, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, was earnestly urging Henry to profit by England's weakness and make war.² But Henry was not easily persuaded. He preferred peaceful diplomacy to the fortunes of war, and already the English had given him to understand that they were prepared to pay almost any price for his friendship. No doubt, Mary repeated the arguments that the surest way to preserve Scotland and acquire Ireland would be to strike down

¹ *Foreign Calendar*, 1847-53, pp. 58, 63, 89, 92. Tytler, *England under Edward VI. and Mary*, vol. i.

² Tytler, *History of Scotland*, vol. vi. p. 61. Sadler, vol. i. p. 569, etc. *Mémoires du Duc de Guise*, pp. 43-44. *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, pp. 50, 52, 54, 56, 61, 65, etc.

England, then France could dictate peace on her own terms and at the point of the sword to England. In any case Mary pleaded with such eloquence that ultimately Henry yielded to her persuasions, and asserted that he would make war on England as soon as circumstances allowed.

The events we have been describing, which were brought to a head by Mary's arrival in France in November, in the month of December produced a situation so critical that Mason—the English ambassador—fell into the deepest despondency, declaring in his despatches to London that it made his heart bleed to see the contempt with which England was universally mentioned, and that it was a common occurrence to hear men at the French court talk of the buying and selling of offices in England, the decaying of grammar-schools and universities, with many other enormities which they showed one another printed in English and set forth by English preachers. But what angered Mason most of all was the behaviour of the Irish and Scots, whom he declared were plotting morning, noon, and night, and of late were assuming airs of prodigious importance, and as they were in great favour with the French nobility, did not scruple to talk treason at least as well as in council, boasting that Ireland was theirs whenever the French king should give them the signal, and that Calais was not a seven nights' work. He declared that Ireland was causing him the utmost anxiety, that he has it 'every day in his dish,' meaning presumably that it is never out

of his mind, and further that 'the Scots bear a fell rout in this court and be much made of, of all estates. They say we shall not have one foot of ground in Scotland peaceably, more than we had before the wars. Ireland is ready to revolt and deliver itself to a new master on a moment's warning.'¹ In the same month Sir George Paris was sent to Ireland to acquaint the Irish lords of France's decision to invade in spring, and he was expected to return in order to report on the condition of affairs and to assist the expedition by his knowledge of Irishmen and Ireland. Mason was furious to hear Paris declaring, on the eve of his departure for Ireland, that 'he doubted not to see the French king shortly bear the crown of Ireland, and that he hopes to bring good news when he returned at the end of Lent. This brag he hears every day.'²

But as once Henry had stayed his hand to watch the outcome of a Papal election, so now he was tempted to pursue an alluring diplomatic alternative. He liked to have two strings to his bow, but in his vacillations between peace and war, as it has often happened, he plucked the fruits of neither.

While the Franco-Irish party had been urging Henry to make war he had been conducting negotiations with England from which he hoped to derive all the advantages of a successful war,

¹ *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, pp. 63, 72, 88, etc. Tytler, *England under Edward VI. and Mary*, vol. i. p. 404. Sadler, vol. i. p. 569 (*vide* Lesley, *History of Scotland*). *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, pp. 181-2.

² *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, p. 63.

with the additional advantage that it would not cost France a drop of blood.

In 1550 Warwick had supplanted Somerset in the regency of England, but, although he was the recognised ruler of England, he dared not ask Parliament for supplies and was under the necessity of humouring those who had aided him to power. But if Warwick was feeble he was cunning, and as he knew that France was maturing plans for the conquest of Ireland he determined to forestall such a contingency by dangling the most tempting proposals before Henry. The wheels of diplomacy could be made to move slowly, and Warwick was determined to keep marking time until the Austrians had come to his assistance. These negotiations between Warwick and Henry started in the summer of 1550, but they proved so fruitless that in the month of December Mary of Guise was able to overcome Henry's pacifist leanings and induce him to consider the advantages of immediate war. But although in December Henry pledged himself to a war with England, the idea still persisted in his mind that a war could be avoided, and, perhaps, the fullest concessions obtained by peaceful diplomacy.¹

Then Warwick saw that no time was to be lost if France was to be prevented from making war, and so, relying on the early intervention of Austria to permit him to break his promises with safety, he suggested to Henry that a marriage alliance should be formed between the two countries and

¹ *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, pp. 100-20. *Spanish Calendar*, January to May 1551.

hinted at the cession of Scotland and Ireland. Henry rose to the bait and the preparations for war slackened.¹

From December 1550 to May 1551 Henry vacillated between peace and war. The Franco-Irish party urged him over and over again to draw the sword, but Henry hesitated and time slipped by without decisive action being taken, just as the English desired. We have seen that Henry was uneasy lest Austria should take him in the rear when he was locked in a struggle with England, and cherished the hope of winning a diplomatic victory as profitable as any conquest that could be gained by the sword. The English were further favoured by the fact that from December onwards the Austrian menace steadily increased, and every bulletin from Rome announced that the Pope was showing himself more and more hostile to French interests. Finally the English ambassadors, with a magnificent retinue, arrived in Paris and asked for the hand of Elizabeth, daughter of Henry II., for Edward VI. They were well received, and so necessary did Henry consider the friendship of England in the near future that although the English embassy on their return journey desecrated chapels, held mock communions, and insulted all the friars they met, there was not as much as a murmur of protest. This showed the intentions of Henry, for in ordinary times the embassy would have been summarily ejected from the country. An equally splendid

¹ *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, pp. 100-20. *Spanish Calendar*, January to May 1551.

embassy then proceeded to England under M. de Saint André.¹ What precisely were the instructions given to the French ambassadors is a difficult question, but a close scrutiny of the existing evidence leaves it certain that Saint André was deputed to offer the young Queen of Scotland to Edward VI. in exchange for Calais and Ireland, and only in the last resort was the proposition about the Princess Elizabeth to be brought forward. This can be proved from independent and unimpeachable authorities. The Imperial ambassadors were deeply interested in these negotiations and were watching their progress attentively. They feared above all things an alliance between England and France, but they were perspicacious enough to discern that on a hint from Austria England would break off the negotiations. Simon Renard was the Imperial ambassador in Paris, Jehan Scheyfve in London, and in almost all their references to the Franco-Irish policy they confirm each other. Renard's despatches are nearly always reliable and are borne out by events. Young, keen-witted, industrious, with a genius for fathoming conspiracies, Renard was the rising star of Charles's diplomatic service, nothing could elude his attention, nothing could baffle his ingenuity,² and in spite of the repeated attempts

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, pp. 325, 330. *Mémoires du Duc de Guise*, pp. 58, 60.

² *Spanish Calendar*, p. 309. *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, p. 180. Rymer, *Fœdera*, vol. xv. p. 273.

The diplomatist, Jehan Scheyfve, is variously referred to by historians as Jehan Scheyfve, Scheyfne, Scheyfre, but his own signature

made by the Irish to throw him off the trail, he wormed his way to the centre of their plans. 'The French are unceasingly fanning the troubles in Ireland' he reported in the summer of 1550.¹ He was the first to detect the alteration in Henry's plans with regard to Ireland. 'Three Irishmen at Court are solliciting the king to accept the sovereignty of Ireland but it seems likely that the king (Henry II.) will temporise until he can feel more sure of your Majesty.'² Again, Renard followed the marriage negotiations between France and England in all their windings and correctly read their meaning when he informed the Emperor that Henry was thereby expecting to acquire Calais and Ireland. His colleague in London, Jehan Scheyfve, reached the same conclusion by a different route. 'Some say the King of France would yield up Scotland to the English and manage to marry the young Queen of Scotland to the King of England in exchange for which England would abandon all claim to Ireland and Calais.' A few lines further on he observes: 'It is hardly to be believed that the English will agree to these bargains, considering the importance of the places in question.'³ In this remark the Imperial ambassador laid his finger on the weak point in the negotiations, and suggested the probability,

is almost always Scheyfve. This and other considerations have decided me in favour of the spelling Scheyfve.

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, pp. 176, 189. Gachard, *Voyage des Souverains des Pays-Bas*, vol. iii.

² *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, p. 197. *Mémoires du Duc de Guise*, p. 65.

³ *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, p. 216.

which afterwards turned out to be true, that England was simply amusing herself with plans that she had no intention should ever materialise. In a word, the English were luring the French into a diplomatic *cul-de-sac* in order to gain breathing space.

In the first months of 1551, although the Franco-Irish party must have been considerably disheartened by the vacillations in Henry's policy, they determined to make one last effort to bring on war before leaving the pacifists and diplomatists in complete possession of the field. Wauchop arrived at the French court, and assisted by the Franco-Scottish party, a brisk campaign in favour of immediate war was initiated. They urged Henry to declare war on England 'on the grounds of its internal dissensions,' and in February (1551) Mason was fully convinced that Henry was bent on hostilities.¹ As before, the Scottish party were foremost in advocating the appeal to the sword, and the Guises, in council and out of council, were pleading for war. Their influence 'passeth all others,' reported Mason, and their sister Mary of Scotland was 'made a goddess.' On all sides Henry was pressed to strike the iron while it was hot, and there can be little doubt at this time England was so honeycombed with intrigues and eaten with disaffection that at the first touch she would have collapsed like a house of cards. But Henry could not make up his mind, and it was this indecision which

¹ *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, pp. 72, 82, 92, 108, 119, 120.

caused French policy to fluctuate from day to day.

In Ireland they waited confidently for the arrival of the French forces, and occupied the interval of waiting in perfecting arrangements and extending the conspiracy, which now spread throughout the whole country and even included parts of Wales, where the peasantry were up in arms against the Reformation and its concomitant economic oppressions.¹ Fears of the French invasion gave members of the Council sleepless nights, and to provide for all eventualities St. Leger was recalled to England and Sir James Crofts put in his place. Crofts was directed to put the seaports of Ulster and Munster in a state of defence, and urged to counteract the conspiracies all over the country. They also requested him to arrest MacCarthy, who was one of the ring-leaders in the conspiracy, and if possible to capture George Paris, 'who was a common post between Ireland and France,' and whom they thought might be found hiding in the French merchant vessels. English troops poured into the country, but the Irish, instead of being overawed by this display of force, grew more and more

¹ Tytler, *England under Elizabeth and Mary*, vol. i. p. 353, etc. *Foreign Calendar*, p. 92 (MSS. Record Office, London).

The Reformation has been described as a 'revolution of the rich against the poor,' and in some cases such a definition is certainly applicable, in proof of which witness the peasant revolts in England and Germany. Modern English capitalism undoubtedly took its rise in the sequestration of Church property, which created a new landed aristocracy without any interests in common with the people. It is suggestive that the religious reformers should be the political reactionaries.

restless. Finally Con O'Neill broke out in rebellion, and James M'Connell and large Scottish forces, almost certainly acting on instructions from Mary of Guise, landed in Ulster and occupied a big stretch of country.¹ All Ireland waited in

¹ *Ireland under the Tudors* (Bagwell), pp. 388-90. Sadler, vol. i. p. 869. *Irish Calendar*, 1509-73, pp. 110, 112.

The situation at the French court is graphically described by Mason in his despatches to the Council. We shall quote one extract from his despatch to the Council on 23rd February 1589: 'Three or four days since I was informed by a wise man and of practice, whom the Frenchman uses often in his secret affairs in Germany, that notwithstanding all their fair words and specious appearances, the King and court are bent upon war with England, and assuredly will if the Frenchman comes into Hungary. That this is prompted by M. de Guise, insomuch as it is already half concluded to send away the Queen of Scots with all convenient speed, and with her 300 or 400 men at arms and 10,000 foot,' etc. 'The Scottish Queen desireth as much our subversion, if it lay in her power, as she desireth the preservation of herself, whose service in Scotland is taken so highly here, as she is in this court made a goddess. M. de Guise and M. d'Aumale, and the Cardinal of Lorraine, partly at her egging, and partly upon an ambitious desire to make their house great, be no hindrance of her malicious design,' etc. (*Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, p. 75). Fully roused to the danger threatening from France the Council proceeded to take steps for the maintenance of Ireland, some details of which may be valuable as an indication of the serious view which they took of the situation: 'January 7th, Articles for the expedition into Ireland. The fortifying of the havens in the South-West and in the North. Baltimore, Beare, Olderfleet, and the Bon. To have six ships, two or three rowing pinnaces and 1000 men, of whom 200 be pioneers, 100 artificers, and 200 mariners.' On 26th January a further communication of the Privy Council to the Lord-Deputy and Council of Ireland runs as follows: 'Informing them secretly that Lord Cobham should be sent to the South of Ireland with a navy and an army to put the port towns in a proper state of defence. In the meantime they may survey Cork, Kinsale, Baltimore, and Bear Haven.' The danger of invasion appeared to be imminent, for on 28th February Sir James Crofts is instructed to visit Cork and Kinsale, Baltimore and Beare and the ports between them and Kinsale. A day later Richard Bethell is sent 'with two ships and a pinnace, with

breathless suspense the arrival of the French, which would have been the signal for a general rising.

Many eyes were watching these happenings with the keenest interest, and in the month of March Jehan Scheyfve thought fit to inform the Emperor: 'It is being repeated here that the King of France has found means in Scotland of inducing a certain Irish Earl to rise up against the English. And that there are bishops in Ireland who criticise the new religion saying that it unsettles and stirs up the people, and renders them disobedient. They say the king is trying to invite the Scots to make war on England in order that he may the more easily make war on Ireland, and that the Pope has transferred to him all the rights claimed by the Church and Apostolic See to the Kingdom of Ireland, with which pretext the Irish will start another war against England. Others say the mines of Ireland tempt the King of France. The English bestir themselves there,'¹ etc.

During the months of February and March the idea was as prevalent on the Continent as in Ireland that at last Henry had abandoned negotiations, and that a war with England was at hand. This feeling also prevailed in England, and Simon

ordnance and munition into Ireland.' Simultaneously the Privy Council informs Crofts 'that two ships are sent to Waterford and Cork with ordnance and munition,' and directs him to inspect the southern ports. A month later the London authorities were equally apprehensive of invasion, for they repeatedly warn the Irish authorities to be watchful. Evidently, on the information of their agents abroad, they looked to an invasion as a certainty.

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, p. 227.

Renard asserted in a despatch to the Emperor: 'The English are aware of the good understanding between the Irish and the King of France, and the intrigues he is carrying on there, and so they are sending an army of ten thousand men to Ireland to shatter the King's hopes and plans and make themselves safe against his intrigues. If the present communications (the marriage negotiations) come to nothing, I foresee there may be war in that quarter, unless the French are held back by the fear of your Majesty.'¹ Renard had gauged the real motive of Henry's change of policy. Convinced by the Franco-Irish that his negotiations would gain him nothing, he had decided for war—but with such regret that if England showed herself in a more obliging mood it was quite possible that he would change his mind again.

In the month of March, therefore, a part of Ireland was in rebellion, and at the sight of the French the rest would have rushed to arms. It only remained for Henry to set the match to the pyre of English domination in Ireland. But for the third time a fatal weakness crept over him and benumbed his resolution so that he once more renewed negotiations with England. The evil news was carried swiftly to Ireland and must have been a terrible blow to the conspirators. Again the chief Irish agents hastened to the French court, and together with the Franco-Scottish party used all means of persuasion to convince Henry that war was the best policy. Wauchop, Paris,

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, p. 244.

and O'Connor were the first to arrive at the French court, and after a consultation with their friends—Mary of Guise, Montmorency, the Vidame of Chartres—they decided to renew formally the allegiance of the Irish chieftains and to convince Henry, by a detailed report on the state of affairs in Ireland, with what ease its conquest could be accomplished. Henry gave them several audiences, but, although he treated them with marked kindness, he refused to make any positive statement as to his intentions.¹ All kinds of pressure were brought to bear on Henry—even the nuncio in Paris exerted his influence, and Wauchop, who had come from Rome, had long audiences with him. Wauchop had gone to Rome in order to procure a transfer of Papal Rights over Ireland to France, and from what the Imperial ambassador reported to the Emperor it is exceedingly likely that he had succeeded in his mission. Even in England they suspected something of that nature had happened, for Dr. Wotton reported to the Council that he had seen a letter from Rome ‘in which it is said that the Bishop of Armagh is thoroughly and very well dispatched touching affairs in Ireland. We can rather conjecture than know certainly, but either it is some cursing or giving the said realm in praedam, or some mischief or other, which he trusts shall take the same effect as have other malicious practices which have hitherto been meant against England from that See.’ At the same time a spy reported that Wauchop had been

¹ Tytler, *England under Edward VI. and Mary*, 18th April 1551 (Sadler, vol. i. p. 570, etc.).

covered with honours at the hands of the Pope, 'the Bishop of Rome having granted him all kinds of faculties, as pardons, dispensations and the like.'¹ Sir John Mason watched the Irish and Scottish swarming round Henry in breathless suspense. Peace or war hung on the decision.² On 18th April he sent a long report to the Council which is well worth quoting :

It may like your Lordship to be advertised, that lately is arrived here with letters one George Paris, an Irishman, who this last Summer, as once or twice I have signified the same unto you, lay here as a Solicitor for the rebels of Ireland, and was with a good reward despatched from Blois in the month of December last. He hath brought in his company another joined in commission with him, who they say is a great gentleman, whose name I have not yet learned. His letters contained nothing but credence. The credence was, I am informed, the offering of the rebels service, with their country as much in them as might lie, to the French king's elevation and subjection, with the request that it might like him to send them some aid to defend his own, if it pleased him to accept it. In which case they assured him Wales would also stir, with whom they had such intelligence as, if they might have hope of any foreign aid, they would not fail to show themselves in the field. Their quarrel was the maintenance of religion, and for the continuance of God's service in such sort as they had received it from their fathers. In the which quarrel they were determined either to stand or to die. The order of the aid they referred to his own device, whether he would send

¹ *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, pp. 72, 82, 108.

² Tytler, vol. i., 18th April 1551 (Sadler, vol. i. pp. 571, etc.) *Foreign Calendar*, 8th April 1551.

the same straight to Ireland, or else (which they wished rather) he would invade the realm of England which if he did they thought he should find an easy enterprise, so willing would the people be on that quarrel to receive him. He set forth with many words, how often the realm had been conquered, whereof he made a long and particular discourse, concluding in the end, that never outward enemy attempted there to land, that it was driven back again, and that it was never so easy to be done as at this time. The reasons whereof he set forth at length, omitting nothing that he thought might serve to the helping forward of his lewd message and the advancing of the said rebellious conquest.

He was well heard, and had very good counsel both of the King and the Constable, and had, for the first answer, that these demands should be considered, and thereupon should they receive such final answer as they should have reason to be contented. This George Paris seemeth a man of cankered malice, and therewithal a man of light behaviour. He hath told his credence to sundry Scottishmen, and hath made divers of them who he taketh for his secret friends believe that he is utterly promised aid at the King's hands. And furthermore hath said, that if there come no greater force out of England than yet is talked of, which is the number of 600, he will warrant they shall not much prevail, trusting to hear shortly the Dauphin proclaimed King of Scotland and Ireland at the least, and with these brags, and such others, he filleth every man's ears that he chooseth to talk withal. The Bishop of Rome's ambassador hath since his coming been twice or thrice at the court, and it is thought about the same matter, which is rather conjectured, for that the said George Paris repaired incontinently to him, as soon as in manner he was from his horseback and since hath sundry times resorted to

him, and at every time hath had long talk with him of late he had not been so brag, and, as I am secretly informed, he is in the end answered, that they shall look for no aid from hence, and yet as I am told by others that the Scottish Queen (Mary of Guise) laboured to have them holpen from underhand, which she would have done by the Earl of Argyll and James M'Connell, but it is thought that they shall have no aid of this king at least openly.

The worst had happened, and the Irish were abandoned by Henry II. Some had risen in rebellion against England on the strength of French promises, and now they had to shift for themselves. A week later Mason was able to state authoritatively the desertion of Ireland by France, and in the same communication he gives some interesting details. He has ascertained that the nameless Irishman is no other than the notorious rebel, Cormac O'Connor.

Last Saturday he (Cormac) exhibited the Constable (Montmorency) a paper, showing what force both horse and foot his father could bring into the field, asked for prompt assistance, as it was by French intrigues this rebellion had wholly been stirred up. He begged for 5000 men at the French king's charges. He was paid with fair words. The Dowager of Scotland (Mary of Guise) would have them holpen, and I am assuredly informed the Vidame (of Chartres) is behind them, who since his coming here hath been very high and friendly entertained by the king.¹

The hour for action was past, and O'Connor might as well have turned back the hands of the

¹ Sadler, vol. i., 23rd April 1551. *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, pp. 89-92.

clock as asked for assistance. Even if Henry had all the good will in the world where Ireland was concerned, he could not now have helped the Irish. Three things conspired to place the Irish enterprise in the realm of lost opportunities. War clouds were gathering in the direction of Austria, and at any moment the Emperor might set his legions marching on France. In Scotland French influence was on the wane. In England the prospect was brightening, and she no longer feared France. Rôles were now reversed and Henry was a humble suitor for English friendship. Thus had caution and compromise proved fatal to France, and Henry had, from a false sense of economy, squandered his opportunities like any spendthrift. Now that a war between Austria and France was a certainty England could afford to remove the mask, and the talk about a marriage alliance grew fainter and fainter until finally it was to be heard no more.

In view of the altered situation Henry frankly expressed his intention to abandon the Irish enterprise, and, in order to ingratiate himself with the English, went so far as to request the Irish to leave the French court.¹ The news was noised abroad, and on 28th April Simon Renard wrote to the Emperor: 'It is said that the King of France will give no help to the Irish, so as not to interfere with the proposal for the marriage he is hoping for, and so as not to anger the English.'² Sir William Kirkaldy of Grange, a leading Scottish

¹ *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, p. 95.

² *Spanish Calendar*, 1150-1552 (28th April 1551), p. 286.

politician, attributed Henry's desertion of the Irish to the increase of French difficulties in Scotland. 'This matter,' he said to Mason, 'will alter many devices, thinking that, had not that been, the King, for all his fair words, would have aided the Irishmen,' etc.¹ But the fact of the matter was that Henry, having let slip the golden opportunity of invading Ireland, now stood helplessly watching the approach of his enemies.

In Ireland those who had risen in rebellion laid down their arms, and Henry, as a sop to their injured feelings, promised to use his good offices on their behalf. Simon Renard kept his master informed of all these developments. On 12th May (1581) he writes: 'When the Irish learned that the King of France would give them no help they made terms with the English, and all have now laid down their arms except a few. The King of France has promised to intercede for them and obtain their pardon.'² Henry could not expect to escape the discredit which his desertion of the Irish entailed. On 10th July Simon Renard wrote to the Emperor: 'The King (Henry) has damaged his reputation by leaving the Irish in the lurch.'³ Mason was in high spirits at the fortunate turn affairs had taken for England, although on 10th May he wrote to the Council that he was displeased to see the Irish still lingering about court, and keeping company with the

¹ Sadler, vol. ii. p. 163. Tytler, *England under Edward VI. and Mary*, vol. i.

² *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52 (12th May 1551), p. 293.

³ *Spanish Calendar*, 10th July 1551, p. 328.

Vidame of Chartres—a generous but inexperienced young man, who was grieved to see his friends despondent, and offered, if all failed, to rescue Ireland with his own hand.¹ But this generous resolution came too late, and in early summer the Irish, bidding farewell to their French friends, shook the dust of Paris from their feet and departed to Scotland, where they found a generous patron and adviser in Mary of Guise.

Wau chop, heavy with years, alone remained in Paris, and he did not long survive the failure of his schemes. His last days were spent in a Jesuit community, where the friend and disciple of Ignatius Loyola was treated with respectful kindness. On the 10th of November 1581 he breathed his last and was buried at the Gray Friars. A contemporary, Bishop Lesley,² has recorded his death in the following terms :

About the same time, a learned wise aged father, called Dr. Wau chop, Scottishman, archbishop of Armagh in Ireland, who was continually from his infancy blind, yet was of so excellent good learning and knowledge, that he was made doctor of Theology in Paris, for the which, and for his wisdom and experience, he was promoted by Pope Paul the third to the said Archbishopric, and sent legate and ambassador by him and Pope Julius the third often times to the emperor, and in France, Scotland, Ireland, and other parts, with a commission also of a legate a latere, where he executed his charge wisely and discreetly to the admiration of many and to

¹ *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, pp. 95, 103.

² Lesley, *History of Scotland* (printed in Rome, 1598), p. 242. Ware, *Annals of Ireland*, p. 115.

the great honour of his whole nation, and now *decessit* in Paris the 10th day of November, and was buried in the Gray Friars.

We have followed the Irish through the labyrinth of French affairs, and we cannot but admire the courage and constancy which did not desert them in the moments of greatest perplexity and which steeled them to bear the hammer blows of misfortune. They had struggled manfully with the python of indecision which seemed to inhabit Henry's mind and they had failed to master it. But this was beyond the wit of man, and in 1551, although the Irish changed their headquarters to Scotland, they did not change their policy, but with invincible fortitude started building from the foundations new schemes for the liberation of Ireland.

CHAPTER VII

AUSTRIA, IRELAND, AND FRANCE

FROM 1549 the Austrians had displayed considerable interest in the secret intercourse between Ireland and France. In 1551 Charles v., on hearing that these intrigues were being continued, charged his ambassadors to keep them under close supervision and to supply him with information as fully and as often as possible. During the years 1549 and 1550 the Imperial agents had followed the course of Franco-Irish intrigues with comparative ease, and, as we have seen, communicated every detail bearing on the Irish enterprise to the Emperor, but from 1551 onwards they were at a loss—for although they could catch the sounds of subterranean intriguing they could not discover anything definite enough to incriminate the French. The Austrians pursued these inquiries in order to find a weapon which would sever the Anglo-French alliance, for they had no mind to fight more than one of these powers at a time. During the first half of the year 1551 all the efforts of Austrian diplomacy to unmask the secret relations of Ireland and France failed.

But the Austrians were right when they felt that these intrigues had been resumed. Scarcely had the Irish turned their back on the French

court in the month of May 1551 when Mary of Guise offered to revive the Franco-Irish alliance, and Henry II. was won over by her persuasions to the view that in secret the Irish insurgents should be aided and abetted. In England they had grounds for suspecting French interference in Ireland, and were so nettled by this evidence of bad faith that when, in March 1552, the French ambassador claimed armed assistance in the war against Austria he was flatly refused. Very little provocation would have caused a rupture of the Anglo-French alliance, and perhaps induced England to join in the Austrian War, and in default of any evidence which would convict Henry of complicity in Irish designs the Imperial ambassadors stooped to the stratagem of hiring an English adventurer called Stukeley, who would claim to have knowledge of a widespread Franco-Irish conspiracy.¹ This versatile *agent provocateur* was to sow distrust between England and France by disclosing French designs on Ireland and Calais. Early in the year 1552 Stukeley returned to England from the French court, and on

¹ *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, pp. 92, 95, 103, 218, 221. *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, p. 564. *Journal of Edward VI.*, 16th, 19th, and 23rd September, pp. 455, 462 (Cotton MSS.). Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 329.

That the Austrians regarded the Irish as a distinct people admits of no doubt. For instance, we find the English Council in spring 1552 complaining to the Queen-Dowager of the Low Countries that 'Irish merchants are obliged to pay all duties, charges, and tolls,' just as if they were foreigners, in contravention of the commercial treaty existing between England and the Netherlands. Numerous other instances on record prove that in Austrian eyes Ireland was a distinct nation. (*Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, pp. 513, 515, etc.)

the plea that he possessed French state secrets asked to be admitted before the Privy Council. There he deposed to have heard Henry II. saying that he would soon attack Calais and Ireland, and this revelation so alarmed the Council that they were on the verge of committing themselves to joint action with the Emperor. But English policy is unaccustomed to err on the side of rashness, and inquiries which were set on foot eventually proved Stukeley to be an impostor and his information a tissue of falsehoods. The shaft shot so dexterously by Austrian diplomacy had barely missed its mark.¹

But if the Austrians were unable to obtain material evidence of Franco-Irish intrigues, it was a sound instinct which told them that these intrigues were going on.

In summer 1551, when the Irish saw they had

¹ Thomas Stukeley is one of the strangest and wildest figures of Tudor times. He was bred a merchant, being son of a rich woollen merchant in the west. Some think that he was an illegitimate son of Henry VIII. He tried his hand at everything. He was soldier, pirate, explorer by turn, and his thirst for wandering was unquenchable. From 1560-81 he plays a conspicuous part in Irish history. Then passing from Ireland to Spain, he flaunted his new prosperity and gorgeous retinue in the face of the wrathful English ambassadors. For a time he was recognised as 'Duke of Ireland' by the Spaniards, and treated as an equal by the proud nobility of that country. He was killed at the battle of Alcazar. No doubt he had much that was attractive and brilliant in his character, for he was a boon friend of Sir Philip Sidney's, though he would certainly have been ill at ease in that dreamer's Arcadia where men were 'void of all guile and treason, and lived after the manner of the golden age.' Paganism had clasped Stukeley with strong and formative hands, and though he was a man of spirit he was as false as water, and moved through life without conscience and in perpetual quest of excitement and new sensation.

no longer any business at the French court, they withdrew, armed with letters of recommendation from Henry II. to Scotland, where Mary of Guise, who was trying to curb the power of the regent Châtelherault and the English faction, received them with open arms.¹ Some of them took up their residence at the court, others found lodgings in Edinburgh, and in a short space of time they were spinning combinations against England as industriously as ever. George Paris did not delay long in Scotland, and before the end of May was moving about Ireland, where his activities must have been on a large scale, for the English Government ordered Crofts to 'apprehend MacCarthy, More, and George Paris' by fair means or foul.² Paris was the focus point of conspiracy, and all the chieftains like Desmond, O'Donnell, O'Doherty, MacCarthy, MacWilliam, who had already been party to French schemes, readily consented to join in a new movement. North and south, east and west are represented in this combination, whence we may draw the important conclusion that as far as national unity was attainable in the sixteenth century it obtained in Ireland.³ What was lacking was not a centralised national consciousness but a central military organisation. These chieftains accredited George Paris to resume negotiations on their behalf with France and Scotland. Thereupon Paris hastened back

¹ Haynes, *State Papers*, p. 133. Bain, *Scottish Calendar*, 1542-69 (March to June 1552).

² *Irish Calendar*, 1509-1601, p. 112 (Irish MSS., Record Office).

³ *Irish Calendar*, 1509-1601, p. 123.

to the Scottish court, and styling himself 'by the name Ambassador of Ireland' approached Mary of Guise on behalf of 'the freedom of his native land.'¹ After some discussion Mary reasserted her determination to do all in her power to further the Irish cause, and within a few months new plans were formed and hopes ran high in Irish quarters. The French were to join hands with the Earl of Argyll and James M'Connell and invade Ireland.

In the year 1548 Brian O'Connor, chieftain of Offaly, had been brought over to England and imprisoned in the Tower as a hostage for the good behaviour of his people. This had been a shrewd stroke of policy, for loyalty to their chieftain had restrained this warlike people from attacking English power with their old pertinacity and vigour. But if they had their chieftain to lead them the pent-up hatred of the English would have flamed up all the more rapidly and fiercely. His son Cormac, therefore, and George Paris, as a preliminary to more serious action, planned his escape. They managed to keep up a correspondence with him in the Tower, and early in 1552 he received a ring from George Paris as a token to be ready for action. Everything went smoothly at first. O'Connor escaped from the Tower one night and made his way northwards, assisted on the road by agents appointed for that purpose. But at the last moment a hitch occurred. An Irish soldier named Walter Garrett was to take O'Connor across the Tweed, and as ill-luck would

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, pp. 587-8.

have it, his efforts to manage his boat without oars attracted attention. He was arrested, and his statements led to the capture of Brian O'Connor, who was brought back to London under a heavy escort and thrown into the Tower again.¹

While these events were occurring in England and Scotland the Irish were on the tiptoe of expectation, and the English authorities themselves shared in the general belief that at last a French invasion was at hand. St. Leger, the Lord-Deputy, was seriously alarmed at the prospect and told the authorities in London to be prepared for the worst.² But the rebellion did not eventuate, and the enthusiasm of both French and Scottish sympathisers, for reasons which escape the searchlight of history, suddenly cooled. Again the Irish experienced the truth that no matter how promising, no matter how sincere, to rely on the support of a foreign friend is to lean on a broken reed.

Although the fidelity of most of the Irish successfully stood the test of this last reverse, there was one notable exception. George Paris's enthusiasm for the Irish cause had diminished considerably since his retirement from France, and the tedium of life in Scotland began to pall on him. Then the reflection must have occurred to him that the Irish were engaged in a struggle against hopeless odds, and it was an easy transition

¹ *Irish Calendar*, 1509-1601, p. 123 (Irish MSS. Record Office, London). *Four Masters*, 1551, 1552.

² *Irish Calendar*, 1509-1601, p. 125 (Irish MSS.) Teulet, *Pièces et Documents inédits relatifs à l'Histoire de l'Écosse*, vol. ii., 1552.

from that idea to the resolution that he would seek fame and fortune under a more prosperous master. Temptation soon came in his way. An Englishman in Edinburgh, Dr. Richard Smith, suggested that if he put the English Government in possession of the correspondence that had passed between the French king and Irish lords he would receive a full pardon and a rich reward. Paris immediately agreed to the proposition. Through the agency of Smith Paris got into communication with the authorities at London, and a bargain was soon struck between the traitor and the Privy Council. In the spring of 1552 it was decided to grant Paris a free pardon, and in the autumn of the same year the 'pardon' was forwarded to the Captain of 'Berwick,' the chief English fortress on the Scottish border, and this official was instructed to deliver the pardon into Paris's hands and have him safely conveyed across the frontier. Apparently the scheme was that Paris should leave Edinburgh under cover of night, and before daybreak he would be well on his way to London with the much-coveted correspondence of Henry II. and the Irish chieftains in his pocket.¹ Whatever was the reason, this scheme was changed at the last moment. It may be that Paris's fellow-conspirators had observed his suspicious familiarity with Dr. Smith and that they had set a strict watch on his movements. At all events

¹ *Acts of Privy Council*, 1552-54, pp. 12, 138, 245, 273. *Journal of Edward VI.*, October. *Irish Calendar*, 1509-1601 (25th October 1552). 'Privy Council to George Paris.' Haynes, *State Papers*, November 1552, p. 129.

sharp eyes were watching him, and so Paris refused to stir outside the gates of the city until he had seen his pardon, and the next instructions of the Privy Council were that Lord Wharton should forward the 'pardon' to Paris either through Sir Nicholas Stirley, who was on garrison duty near the Scottish border, or through some other reliable agent. After some delay Stirley selected a man called Digby to carry the 'pardon' and other English despatches to Paris, and the latter reached Edinburgh in October and, it appears, placed Paris in possession of the documents. The night was fixed for Paris's flight from Edinburgh, but before that night had come news of his treachery reached the Irish and Scots by roundabout sources.¹

However cautious Paris's behaviour had been in Edinburgh, he could not prevent tongues from wagging in London, where it was an open secret that disclosures of the most startling description would shortly be forthcoming relative to French intrigues in Ireland. It happened that Black Thomas, the Earl of Ormonde—a popular and good-natured young Irishman—was at court, and, on hearing these rumours, he wrote to the Earl of Desmond warning him that they had traitors in their midst, and hinting that the less they trusted George Paris the better. The Irish lords immediately sent one of O'Connor's sons to communicate their suspicions to M. d'Oisel, the French ambassador in Scotland, and requested him to get

¹ Haynes, *State Papers*, 11th November 1552. *Acts of Privy Council*, 1552-54 (October 1552).

to the root of the matter. These warnings had not come a day too soon. Twenty-four hours later Paris would have been in the saddle, and within three days the English Government would have had enough evidence in its possession to convict more than half of the Irish chieftains of treason, which was probably what they had in view throughout all these intrigues with Paris. D'Oisel acted promptly and informed the provost of the city that he had good grounds for suspecting that Paris was a traitor. This led to a search of Paris's rooms, and in a strong box was discovered damning evidence of his guilt. The discovery of Paris's treachery aroused a storm of indignation in Scotland, and by order of the Queen-Dowager he was imprisoned in Falkland Castle. While Paris was meditating on the disadvantages of treachery Cormac O'Connor was sent by the Queen-Dowager to reassure the Irish chieftains and to confirm them in their alliance with France.¹ Dr. Smith, who was under a cloud in the eyes of the English Government, had signalled himself by his activity in all these intrigues—no doubt with the purpose of regaining favour. He reported to Sir Nicholas Stirley all that had happened in an informative despatch.²

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL SIR,—Pleaseth you to be advertised, that one Digby a servant of yours (as he sayeth

¹ *Queen Elizabeth and her Times*, Thomas Wright, November 1552, vol. i. pp. 136, 138. 'Dr. Richard Smith to Sir Nicholas Stirley.' *Irish Calendar*, 1509-1601, p. 129. *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, pp. 585-8.

² Haynes, *State Papers*, p. 130.

to me) came to me at St. Andrews, the 10th day of November, and said that your Mastership had received from the King's Majesty a pardon for George Paris, for his priest Robert Daly, and the third for me. The which tidings was to me very great comfort and joy, and I am much desirous to see it, that, upon the sight of it, I may despatch my business and affairs that I have to do here, and prepare myself to return into my country again, as soon as I may conveniently without danger. Sir Robert Daly, I am sure will come with me, if it may please your goodness to send his pardon. And as for George Paris he is in prison by the Queen's commandment. And M. d'Oisel her servant complained of him that certain Englishmen besides me, did resort to him, and brought letters out of our country's and that I made answer again to them in his name, adding that he had in his coffer a great box of letters. Whereupon the Queen sent to the Provost of Edinburgh to search his chamber for letters detaining him with them at Fawklin, and so he did, and found there, in a coffer, the King's Highness' pardon, a letter sent to him from one Berwick of New Castle, with an answer to the same written in my hand. Whereupon they keep him in prison to know (as I conjecture) what the French king wills shall be done to him. There is raised a common bruit, that he and I wrote the secrets of this Realm to the Counsel of our King, and that they found, in Paris's coffer, letters written by me concerning the said matter, which is very false. I dare say, if Master Paris may once get out of prison, that he will be soon in England and do our king singular good service in Ireland. It is told to me that O'Connor the Irishman that was with Master Paris, is sent by the Queen into Ireland, with letters to show them what Paris has done, and to comfort them that they go not from their promise made to the French king concerning that country, etc.

Rumours of these events spread far and wide, and in France they were magnified into a general belief that the Irish had deserted France. To correct these false impressions the Queen-Dowager and D'Oisel drew up a detailed report of the whole matter, intended only for the eyes of Henry II. and his immediate advisers, and together with other important despatches, consigned them to the care of a reliable courier, who was instructed to exercise unwonted caution on this journey. What befell him on the road with all its curious consequences will be narrated after a few introductory remarks.

The war which had broken out in September 1551 had been progressing unfavourably for the Empire. In 1552 the feet of the Austrian eagle were caught in a net of wars and did not seem likely to break loose for a good while to come. Charles V. was in bad health, and the words 'This Parma war—the Devil take it—has ruined' which he scribbled at the foot of a memorandum conveys a fairly accurate indication of the poor prospects for the Empire. Whatever chance of victory Charles had against France alone he would have a very poor chance against France and England united. In consequence the Austrians had employed the Irish question to cause a cleavage between England and France, but as we have seen, neither diplomatic activity nor the expedient of Stukeley had succeeded. None the less they were still on the watch for information in regard to Franco-Irish activities, and a stroke of good fortune was now to give them

what they had been vainly seeking during two years.¹

As the courier from Scotland, bearing the despatches of Mary of Guise, was passing through the Boulonnais, three English soldiers in the Imperial service, who were out reconnoitring, waylaid him and relieved him of the mail-bag. The seizure was conveyed to the Queen-Dowager (of the Low Countries) in Brussels, and as she greedily examined its contents she saw with astonishment that they had stumbled on a gold mine of information. The mail-bag contained two memoirs of exceeding importance. The first was a memoir drawn up for Henry's use by the Queen-Dowager of Scotland and M. d'Oisel, informing Henry that D'Oisel had forestalled the Irishman—George Paris—who was plotting to buy his pardon from the English by handing over to them the correspondence between the French king and the Irish nobles. Next in importance was a memoir warning the French king that the regent Arran, Duke of Châtelherault, was planning to maintain his authority in all its present vigour after the young queen (Mary Queen of Scots) had come of age, which would involve disastrous consequences for French influence in Scotland.²

The letter of the Queen-Dowager to Henry II.,

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52. *Vide* Introduction, also pp. 468, 513, 515, etc.

² *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, pp. 585-8. *Journal of Edward VI.*, November 1552. Haynes, *State Papers*, pp. 140-1.

dated 'Falkland, 6th October 1552,' is full of interest and importance.¹

His Majesty may also learn what has happened with regard to the two Irish gentlemen who came to this country by his orders, as they said and letters from him to the Queen Dowager, brought by them, testified. One of them, George Paris, who had often gone with letters from the Irish princes to His Majesty, and to conduct important business, has been discovered a traitor to His Majesty and faithless towards the Irish lords. He had negotiated his pardon with the King of England, and succeeded in obtaining from him letters remissive of all offences by him committed, together with a safe conduct and a passport to proceed to England, which he had decided soon to do. The worst of it is that he was going to take with him His Majesty's letters for the Irish princes, which he still had in his possession, and also the Irishmen's for his Majesty. Only M. d'Oisel discovered his malicious intentions two days ago, and in the Regent's name had all his papers seized. Among them were found the above mentioned letters and other writings that bear witness to his double dealing, to the great hurt of the Irish princes. It is thus clear that all he said to the Queen Dowager was false, when he enlarged upon his elevation to his Majesty, and zeal for the welfare and freedom of his native land.

It seems to M. d'Oisel that it would not have been right to let George Paris show to the King of England and his Council his Majesty's original letters. There is no doubt that in virtue of them the English government would have confiscated the property and persons (if they could) of the Irish lords, summoning them to attend the parliament and then proceeding to their trial. They

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, pp. 585-8. *Queen Elizabeth and her Times*, Thomas Wright, vol. i. p. 138.

will not find it so easy to do so now, at least as far as George Paris's evidence goes, for with the Queen Dowager's approval and by the Regent's orders he has been put in a safe place, and with a pretext which leaves the English no room for complaint. The other gentleman, Paris's companion, has lately returned from Ireland with letters from certain princes and lords to the Queen Dowager, from which it appears that the said lords had grave suspicions of Paris. The letters of Desmond had letters from the Earl of Ormonde, an Irishman now at the English court, to the effect that something was brewing there with Paris's help to Desmond's hurt, and this led M. d'Oisel to make inquiries and researches. The other gentleman, Cormac O'Connor, is a man of zeal, integrity and devotion, as the Irish lords well know. He has been banished, his property confiscated, his father is a prisoner in England. Wherefore he humbly begs your Majesty to enable him to live like a gentleman until times shall improve.

The Queen-Dowager, as she perused these documents at Brussels, came to the conclusion that they could be put to excellent diplomatic use. By the memoir relating to Ireland could be demonstrated to England the hollowness of the French alliance, and perhaps the English would be sufficiently angered to join Austria in the war. By the second memoir the Scottish people could be shown the ambitious aims of France in Scotland, perhaps with the result that a mutual hostility would be engendered. Thus France would receive two terrible blows. A lucky chance had put the apple of discord into Austria's hands, and it remained only to cast it into the midst of her enemies with the greatest possible effect.

The French and Scottish authorities were seriously put about when they heard that the mails had been captured, and they instantly proceeded to take steps for their recovery. Messengers were sent post-haste to demand them back from the Queen-Dowager on the grounds that the seizure had been effected on French territory. The Queen-Dowager, however, was impervious to either threats or entreaties, and even when a special envoy arrived from Mary of Guise he got no satisfaction but was met with a cold and downright refusal.¹

The Queen-Dowager now informed the Emperor of her discovery, and a letter which described the manner in which she had obtained possession of the mails contains the sentence, 'There is mention of the arrest in Scotland of an Irish gentleman who had been instructed to plot in Ireland against the King of England. And that might enlighten the English as to the good will borne them by the French.' The next requirement was to make known to the English what they had discovered, and in this matter the Imperialists had to act with extreme delicacy. Imperial pride demanded that England should not get the impression that they were stumbling over one another in their anxiety for her friendship, nor, on the other hand, could the English themselves sacrifice dignity to curiosity, and so with punctilious formality the matter was first raised by the Queen-

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, pp. 596-604 ('Queen Dowager to the Emperor'), p. 608 ('Queen Dowager to Queen Dowager of Scotland').

Dowager. She instructed her confidential secretary, Longin, to mention in course of conversation to Sir Thomas Gresham, who was then watching over England's commercial interests in the Netherlands, that important information on French and Irish affairs had come to hand, which out of friendship for England, if he wished, would be placed at his disposal. Gresham betrayed a quite undiplomatic eagerness to learn the secrets, and spoke about the English alliance with France, saying that 'England was not so deep in it as some folk imagined, and that many people in England desired to see their friendship with the Emperor strengthened,' and went on to hint at a marriage alliance by which the English might be separated from France and brought to espouse the Imperial side.¹

Having roused Gresham's curiosity, Longin then changed the conversation and returned to the Queen - Dowager with the intelligence that the English seemed to be well inclined towards the Empire. Thereupon Longin was instructed to show the captured mails to Gresham, with a reminder, however, that if there was any question of alliance it was for England to take the initiative. Again Gresham was all amiability, and having looked through the papers he expressed the liveliest satisfaction, and, provided with duplicates, set out for London.²

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, pp. 596-614. Haynes, *State Papers*, p. 132. *Life of Sir Thomas Gresham*, Burgon, vol. i. pp. 77, 78.

² *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, pp. 596-604, 605. *Journal of Edward VI.*, 24th November 1552.

Gresham travelled slowly, for he was in poor health, and he thought the matter pressing enough to send a courier ahead with a despatch to Northumberland. In this letter he hints broadly at the question of an Anglo-Austrian alliance and tells the story of his dealings with Longin. 'Now about this report,' he writes, 'made to the Regent by Jasper Schetz, it hath pleased her Grace to send her Treasurer, M. Longin, to this town, to reveal unto me a matter which greatly toucheth the King's Majesty. And that is, there are letters of the Queen of Scots come to her hands, that were taken between Calais and Boulogne, which were written to the French King. Which letters and articles I have seen with my eyes, subscribed by the Queen of Scots, Mary, and H. Clenten, dated at Falkland the 6th day of October, anno 1552. Whereof the said Treasurer is commanded to give me a copy thereof, written with his own hands, with a copy of another letter, that the French King writes to his ambassador in London, the 27th day of January anno 1548, which is a marvellous matter for to see, which copy shall not so soon come to my hand, but I shall repair to your Grace with all the diligence I can make (being in so weak a state as I am) for my discharge for that the matter may be of such more importance, than I am able to discuss at this present. And at my coming I shall declare unto your Grace at large, what talk hath passed between Monsieur Treasurer Longin and me. It may please your Grace to have a regard to my Lord of Ormond, of the King's Majesty's Privy Council, for that he is

touched in the Queen of Scots' letter written to the French King, as knows our Lord, whom preserve your Grace in health and long life, with increase of favours. From Antwerp 26th day of November, at eight of the clock at night.' ¹

The matter was also discussed in a letter of the 'Lords of the Council' to Sir George Chamberlain. 'Gresham,' they wrote, 'staying in Jasper Skelt's house, was approached by one treasurer Longin on behalf of the Regent, who discovered to him the letter was about Paris.' ²

Gresham arrived in London on 24th November (1552) and submitted the captured correspondence to the King and Privy Council, and for the first time they had conclusive proof of what France had all along been aiming at under colour of friendship. At an earlier date they had some inkling of French designs, and during the month of October they had been considering schemes for the defence of Ireland against any possibility of French and Scottish invasion. Edward, according to a contemporary, was much concerned with the state of Ireland, 'which he found very necessary to be consulted at this juncture. For he was in effect come to a resolution of breaking with France, which had dealt so injuriously with his merchants and subjects, and trifled with him in making that reasonable satisfaction he required, and which, as soon as peace should be made with the Emperor, intended, as the King

¹ Haynes, *State Papers*, p. 132. *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, p. 230.

² *Foreign Calendar*, p. 134. *Queen Elizabeth and her Times*, Wright, vol. viii. p. 138.

had intelligence, to fall upon his territories in France and upon Ireland by the help of the Scots. And in the month of October it was also discovered how that the King had practiced in Ireland with the Earl of Desmond, and other Irish lords, by one Paris, who now revealed it and got his pardon.' ¹ Edward himself refers to the matter in his diary as follows: 'Whereas one George Paris, Irishman, who had been a practicer between the Earl of Desmond and other Irish lords and the French King, did now being weary of that matter, practice means to come home, and to have his old lands again, his pardon was granted him, and a letter was written to him from my Council, in which he was promised to be considered and helped.' ² The letters which the King and Privy Council obtained from Gresham confirmed their apprehensions with regard to Ireland and produced an instantaneous change in the political situation. The Franco-English alliance dissolved at once, and for some time it looked as if England would make common cause with the Empire. Northumberland proposed to the Secretary of State that a competent soldier should undertake the Irish government, and that some one conversant with the French and German languages should be placed near the Emperor's person. ³ That finally Sir Nicholas Stirley should be replaced by a more efficient governor in Berwick.

¹ Strype, *Annals of Reformation*, vol. ii. p. 596.

² *Journal of Edward VI.*, October 1552.

³ Haynes, *State Papers*, pp. 132-4, 23rd November 1552.

These events transpired during November, and they bulk largely in the notices in Edward's journal for that month. One entry runs as follows: 'Thomas Gresham came from Antwerph hither to declare how M. de Longin, treasurer to the Emperor of Flanders, was sent to him from the Regent with a certain packet of letters which the Burgonians had taken in Boulonnais, coming from the Dowager of Scotland, the effect whereof she had committed George Paris, the Irishman to prison, because she had heard of his meaning to return into England, how she had found the pardon he had, and divers other writings and how she had sent O'Connor's son into Ireland, to comfort the lords of Ireland.'¹

In the month of October Crofts had been summoned to England to render an account of the state of Ireland, but these late developments showed that he could badly be spared, and so Henry Knollys was sent to countermand the previous order and bid Crofts stay where he was. 'Harry Knollys,' states Edward, 'was sent post-haste into Ireland with a letter to stay the Deputy if he met him in Ireland because of this discovery,' etc., 'also he had with him certain articles concerning the whole state of the realm, which the Deputy was called to answer.'² During the last month of 1552 the English were nervous lest Ireland should slip from their grasp. We insert an account of these events by a sober-minded contemporary which sheds some light on corners of our history hitherto plunged in pitch darkness.

¹ *Journal of Edward VI.*, November 1552.

² *Ibid.*

Matters in Ireland about this time stood thus. There had lately been some disturbances in the Northern ports by O'Connor, and some of the Irish lords, blown up, as it seems by the French and the Scots, making use of the practices of one George Paris, a discontented Irishman, who, at length, in hope of his lands, made discovery and had letters, promising him pardon and more favour which coming to the knowledge of the Queen of Scots, he was clapped up in Stirling Castle, when he was about coming out of Scotland into England. Seasonable opposition being made against these stirs, by some of the nobility and chief men in the kingdom, and by the cities of Dublin and Drogheda, under the Lord Deputy,¹ things were appeased and set at quiet. Whereupon the King in October sent several letters one to the Lord Chancellor and Council, another to the Master of the Rolls there. Another to the Master of Ordnance, and a fourth to the Earl of Desmond signifying, as the Lord Deputy there had advertised his Majesty of their diligent service done to him in the expedition northwards, so he would not neglect to keep the same in good remembrance to requite when occasion should require. And two other letters of the same effect were sent to Dublin and Drogheda.

At this juncture the King sent for Crofts, the Lord Deputy, over to his presence, the letters importing That for as much as certain articles sent to the Privy Council could not be resolved and answered, without present conference with him by his Majesty and the Council, he should repair thither, leaving the charge of that realm, during his absence to the Chancellor there, the two Justices of the Bench and Common Pleas, and the chief Baron of the Exchequer, jointly to minister the affairs of that Realm. This letter was dated 27th October, yet on 7th November letters came from King to Lord Deputy

¹ *Annals of Reformation*, vol. ii. p. 598.

to nominate and appoint Sir Thomas Cusack to supply the place of Chief Governor of the Realm, during his absence, together with Sir Gerald Alymer, Justice of the Bench. But upon new advice the Deputy was told to stay in Ireland,' etc.¹

Nowhere else, to the best of our knowledge, is it stated that the O'Connors actually raised the standard of revolt in the course of this year, but, although we cannot vouch absolutely for their accuracy, these statements accord remarkably with the general posture of affairs and have every appearance of being accurate.

Thus did the English Government endeavour to cope with the menace of a French invasion of Ireland. The diplomatic situation must now be examined with a view to ascertaining what precisely were the effects of Gresham's revelations.

Immediately after the arrival of Gresham in London towards the close of November Northumberland had suggested the appointment of an English representative at Brussels, and Sir George Chamberlain, furnished with letters of credence, was despatched to take up that post. On his departure he was presented with a long report from the Lords of Council for his guidance in his diplomatic mission. It is an illuminating account of the whole transaction between Gresham and the Regent, and it serves to show that England was seriously entertaining the idea of an alliance with Austria. Large extracts are necessary to a thorough understanding of the situation.

¹ *Annals of Reformation*, vol. ii. p. 598. Haynes, *State Papers*, pp. 140-1.

After our hearty commendations, ye shall understand that we have of late had certain matters opened to us from the Regent there by certain means whereof the King's Majesty being advertised, it is thought meet that some further progress shall be used in the same by your ministry there. The matter will somewhat at length declare, to the intent you may, having knowledge thereof, use the same more to purpose. In the end of this last summer, Thomas Gresham having occasion of communication with the emperor's ambassador here resident, entered into talk of the civil state of the emperor's low countrys, as the time then served (his proceedings therein being not without advice given to him) and such was his talk, as the emperor's ambassador, perceiving him to utter signification of his mission, to have this Realm, and that country better assured in friendship and amity, for the weal of them both, hath advertised thither, as the consequence giveth likelihood, somewhat of Gresham's talk.

Whereupon Thomas Gresham, at his last being in Flanders, lying at Jasper Skelt's (Scheltz's) house, hath been communed withal, upon what occasion he had this talk with the Ambassador, who answered, that only as a merchant, having trade in those countries, and bearing therefore a zeal to the weal thereof, he was moved to speak to the ambassador, as to a minister, in such causes, rather wishing in words, that he would for the advancement of the old amity betwixt this Realm and those Low Countrys,¹ and consequently the weal of them both, than meaning anything otherwise of purpose to be a meddler therein. Thereupon the Regent sent one Treasurer Longin to Jasper Skelt's (Scheltz's) house, to commune further with Gresham, and having the like entry of talk with him, and the same answer of Gresham,

¹ Haynes, *State Papers*, 23rd November 1552. *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, p. 616.

he showed unto him, for administration of the Queen's amity and love to the King's Majesty and his country's that of late a courier being addressed out of Scotland, to the French king, was distressed beside Boulogne by the Burgonians, having divers packets of letters, amongst the which one of much moment to be known to us here, which was a declaration in writing signed with the Queen Dowager's hand to the French king, of her and M. d'Oisel's proceeding there, with one George Paris, a gentleman of Ireland, who hath indeed been of long time a traitor to the King's Majesty, and hath continually followed and applied himself to all the traitorous practices of Ireland, against the King's Majesty in the French court. And now being stricken with repentance of his former wickedness after his coming into Scotland (to which place he was directed by the French king) he made such earnest suit for remission and pardon, that the same was granted, and being sent to Berwick to be delivered to him at his entry out of Scotland, the same was indiscreetly handled by Sir Nicholas Stirley, who had the charge thereof, sending it to Edinburgh to him. And now as the Queen's letter purporteth, upon accusations brought out of Ireland, he is taken and imprisoned. And therein appeareth to the Queen and the French ambassadors in Scotland, such danger of the discovery of his former practices both by the French King's own letters, and the writings of divers others of the noblemen of Ireland, contrary to their allegiance and truth, that they hath advertised the French King thereof. And in the same letter, sheweth to Gresham, signed with the Queen's hand (whereof we have the copy delivered to Gresham by Monsieur Longin, concordant with the original) appeareth matter of much importance and worth knowledge for the better order of Ireland, etc., upon whose declaration, compared with our affairs here, and the intelligence also

out of Scotland, beside the consideration of your last letter, mentioning the communication that one of the presidents had with you of late, by questioning of Ireland and Scotland and of the state of our causes of depredations by the Frenchmen, we see the matter to contain some substance in it, and therefore meaning nowise to neglect that friendship that may be gotten, the King's Majesty's pleasure is, that you shall consider the premises with yourself and thereupon make your repair to the Regent, delivering the King's Majesty's letter of credence to her, and from the King's Majesty to salute her Majesty as well as you may, and then give her to understand in general terms that the King's Majesty understandeth by the means of certain intelligences given to one Thomas Gresham, His Majesty's agent in Antwerph from her, by declaration of the Treasurer Longin, that she like a good and loving sister, regarded right well the great and ancient amity that hath long continued between his Majesty's Realm and these countries, for demonstration whereof the friendly discovering of the letters sent out of Scotland, and lately taken about Boulogne, seemeth so plain an argument to the King's Majesty, that he cannot choose but command you expressly to give to Her Majesty his most hearty thanks, and assure her this her friendly usage of His Majesty cannot lack the reciprocal demonstration, if it anywise may lie in His Majesty. Beside the letters discovered, you may say that Thomas Gresham reporteth such good friendly words spoken by the Treasurer Longin, as because his experience served him not to conceive such matters, he cannot plainly report the same. And you may say that we of the King's Majesty's Council hath signified unto you, that you shall assure either the Queen or the said Treasurer, that if they shall send any man to propound any matter tending to the strengthening and augmentation of amity between the King's Majesty

and his good brother the emperor, they shall perceive us always ready and willing to the furtherance thereof, as reason anywise shall bear us.'

And so this despatch rambles on to the end advising Chamberlain to neglect no means of fostering an Anglo-Austrian entente.

Apparently, then, Imperial diplomacy had achieved its purpose—had at last brought England into the Imperial camp. It has been said that style is the art of concealing one's thoughts, and certainly the style of diplomatists would answer to this description. At all events, when Chamberlain arrived in Antwerp, acting on his instructions, he expressed his lively sense of the obligations under which the kindness of the Regent had placed England, and sounded the Imperial agents on the question of an alliance in such terms as to convey the impression that England was warmly in its favour. On the whole, however, he confined himself to vague generalities, and the Imperialists interpreted his statements too literally when they drew the conclusion that an alliance with England was to be had for the asking. The following extracts from his first report, dated 13th December, to the 'Lords of Council,' exemplify his method of carrying on the negotiation, and incidentally bring to light the extent to which the discovery of Franco-Irish designs had influenced England.

Please your most honourable Lordships to be advertised, how that this day in the forenoon the two Presidents came unto me and declared to me on the Regent's behalf, how that her Grace having talked with the Treasurer Longin, about his discourse had with

Thomas Gresham, the same, they said, had told her that the first beginning of the talk came of the said Gresham, who having heard of certain French letters intercepted, which mentioned somewhat of us, asked of the Treasurer what the same might be, whereupon the Treasurer told him that one day he might happen to see the same of which talk the Treasurer, at his return from Antwerph, made report to the Regent, who thereupon willed him at his next repair to Antwerph again for to show Thomas Gresham the said letters on her behalf, like as he did. And so they said, that the Treasurer and Thomas Gresham, devising together familiarly, did debate between them, how much necessary it was for both Princes, to take heed of such a feigned friend, but nothing they said, spoken of sending any such personage to propose any thing. And unto this they added, that the Regent had commanded them to say unto me, that being now so well assured of the King's Majesty's part, by my Report concerning the amity (besides that she never had at any time contrary suspicions of his Highness) she did think the treaty sufficient and strong enough already, and wist not to what intent any personage should be sent, or what might be more devised, but, if hereafter, they said, anything might seem needful to be treated upon, they might tend to a more strengthening of the said amity, she would be ready, as she had been ever, to hold her hand thereunto. And with this they ended their whole purpose. Whereupon meaning to execute the good office that your Lordships do look for of me, and for to induce as much as I could, I did reply again, saying, that by the King's Majesty's commandment, I had assured the Regent of his entire good will and intent to the observation of the amity for ever, and also had made¹

¹ Haynes, *State Papers*, 13th December 1552. *Papiers d'État du Cardinal de Granvelle*, December 1552.

her Grace no less demonstration, I said, of your Lordship's most whole and good disposition thereunto, so that if there were nothing else, upon the discovery of these practices, thought meet by them to be talked upon, I accounted, I said, all to be well enough, and as well as might be. And so repeating to them the necessity of the amity, taking into regard the situation of our two countries and the commodities of each, wherewithal to set the people at work on both sides, it argued, I said, that Almighty God the ordainer thereof willed there should be a perfect neighbourhood, love, and amity between both, which by the continuance thereof of so many years, doth well declare God to be the author thereof. And therefore I accounted infallible. Then to come in again to the purpose, I told them that Thomas Gresham took all the Treasurer's devices to proceed from the Regent, whose name he used in shewing of the letters. And albeit the said Gresham, excused himself (as I had told the Regent) that he was not so to make report plainly again of the same, it seemed unto him, that upon the revealing of these practices (whereby is sufficiently declared that good love or friendship any or both our masters might hope for) I said, on that side something on her Grace's behalf and her counsels had been thought meet forthwith to have been decided upon, for better and more certain assurance of both our masters estates, which to myself, I counted to be all one. And so I told them that, if perhaps the Treasurer had cast out such like words, I for myself did not think his purpose but to be very good, and would wish, I said, that like as we have all good cause, by this thing revealed, and sent us from God, unlooked for of either part, that we should like good ministers upon so good a warning be now more careful how to conserve our Master from such perils and dangers, or such wicked intents might be able to pass.

And thereunto I said, I did think myself for my part most bound, and do earnestly wish, that God of his Grace, would grant me such knowledge whereby I might be able to demise ought, that might redound both to the wealth of both my master and theirs.

With such wealth of eloquence did Chamberlain endeavour to gain the confidence of the Imperialists, but their agents received a rude awakening when they made definite proposals at London which were summarily rejected. Men in the sixteenth century had time on their hands and went in an easy, tranquil way about their business, as those who have read the foregoing extracts can see. Chamberlain himself says, 'Thus have I discoursed unto your Lordships their very talk with me, and mine with them, not much varying from our words indeed.' In his next interview with the Imperial agents Chamberlain found them vexed at the reception which had been given to their proposals in London. He writes: 'There was a Counsellor which one day gave me to understand in communication, that they had received a nay of you, which I guess doth now cause them to stand the stiffer. For I talking to the said Counsellor of the amity, what speak you thereof, quoth he, or what should we trust thereto, seeing you refuse to aid us, which by the treaty you are, quoth he, bound unto which I did qualify as well as I could, saying, that the Emperor, God be thanked, was in no such need.'¹

For some time longer England dangled the bait

¹ Haynes, *State Papers*, p. 140. *Papiers d'État du Cardinal de Granvelle*, November, December 1552.

of an alliance before Imperialist eyes, and the Queen-Regent, who was full of hope, kept the Emperor informed of what was happening. In December she writes to him: 'As your Majesty knows, there were certain articles in the memoir relating to Ireland and England. I also made a declaration of their contents to the King of England's agent at Antwerp, who is in favour with the Duke of Northumberland. He immediately proceeded in person and informed the king and duke, and Mr. Chamberlain, ambassador resident here, has spoken to me about the matter,' etc.¹

In the long run it dawned upon the Imperialists that England had no intention of joining in the war, and that henceforward she would observe a neutral attitude. The war between the Empire and France was a godsend to England. It came in the nick of time to save Ireland and Calais from the clutches of France. England desired nothing better than to see both France and the Empire exhausting themselves in war, and she had no mind to assist the Empire in obtaining a decisive superiority over France. The weakness of Continental states was England's strength, and even in her wildest moments she never lost sight of that truth. If the Irish bombshell had not produced such devastating results as the Imperialists expected, it had certainly severed the Franco-English alliance. Austria, therefore, would engage France in single combat. Thus had Irish affairs entered into the calculations of almost

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1550-52, p. 598.

all the great states and exercised an appreciable influence on the current of European politics in the years 1551 and 1552.

In the year 1553 the Irish found new hope. During that year the breach continued to widen between England and France. England, said the Venetian ambassador, was chafing under the French domination in Scotland.¹ But though her anger was great it was not great enough to bring her to the point of making war. And when Charles v. demanded that England should fulfil her treaty obligations contracted under Henry VIII. Edward excused his neutrality on the grounds that he was not bound by his father's treaties.² He offered instead to act as a mediator between the warring powers.³ As a result of this cautious and cowardly policy England fell to the rank of a third-rate power.

On the other hand, during 1553 France was full of warlike energy and will to victory. The Irish were protected and patronised openly and told that the day was fast approaching when the sword of France would strike off their English fetters. The Irish rejoiced at the sight of England's decline and watched with keen interest the success of French arms in the Netherlands, the vital point in English commercial prosperity, and even Edward sadly confesses in his diary that in the Netherlands 'the greatness of the French King is dreadful' and that he was 'breaking and burning of our

¹ *Venetian Calendar*, vol. v. p. 562.

² *Journal of Edward VI.*, pp. 432-3, 455-6, 538-41.

³ *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53, p. 245.

ships which be the old strength of this isle.' Worse tidings still soon reached England. They were informed by the most reliable agents that Henry was preparing an attack on Calais and Falmouth, while Guise with the help of the Scots was to invade the north of England. If the plans had materialised French power would have been consolidated, and Ireland would certainly have recovered her liberties. But on 6th July 1553 Edward VI. died and events took a dramatic turn.¹

¹ In the reign of Mary George Paris escaped and wandered through Scotland in disguise. Finally, in desperation he gave himself up to Grey, an English commander, and threw himself on the mercy of the English Government. Cecil, who had eyes for everything, thought he should be pardoned, and expresses his views in a letter to Sir William Petre, dated 6th July 1560: 'I pray you let her Majesty's pleasure be known for the pardon of George Paris of Ireland, who was here interned in household with the old Queen, as an instrument to trouble Ireland. He left her three weeks before her death, and yielded himself to the Lord Grey. He seemeth to be sorry for his former doings, and requireth pardon, and offereth to do many things in Ireland for getting thereof, and for recovery of many evil men. I dare not promise much. I think if he were proved with my Lord Lieutenant it were not much amiss. He has lost his entertainment by leaving the Queen here, who was also much offended with him. I have put him in comfort both of pardon, and relief of some pension, to make a proof of him now that peace is gotten he may be used in Ireland with less danger. I beseech you, if he shall have his pardon, let it be sent with speed. His name is George Paris, gentleman. He hath had two granted before time and sent thither, but the one never came to him, the other was taken from him by the Queen here.' It is evident that Cecil interviewed Paris personally and was so impressed with his capacities as to procure him a pardon. He then enters on the perilous career of a spy and is soon lost to sight. He was a typical product of this unprincipled age, for, like many of its ablest sons, he was brilliant and faithless, and like many of them, by his deeds, has earned an 'unworthy immortality.' *Domestic Calendar*, 1547-65, p. 436. Haynes, *State Papers*, 6th July 1860. Wright, *Queen Elizabeth and her Times*, p. 353. *Foreign Calendar*, 1560-61, 15th June 1560.

CHAPTER VIII

FRANCE, THE NORTHUMBERLAND CONSPIRACY, AND IRELAND

IN the spring of 1550 it was known throughout Europe, despite English efforts to conceal the fact, that the days of Edward VI., King of England, were numbered. He had contracted consumption and taken to his bed early in the year, and now the eyes of statesmen and princes turned to watch his death agonies, for he was the last male of the Tudors, and it was a matter of common knowledge that the question of the succession was bristling with difficulties. Mary Tudor, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, stood next in succession, but for many reasons she was obnoxious to the people and nobility. She was a staunch Catholic, and in the teeth of royal prohibition she had openly expressed her religious convictions. Even Edward's personal efforts to reduce her to conformity did not succeed, and she continued to hear Mass as regularly as before. Finally, when a deputation waited on her to show her the error of her ways, Mary had answered with the bluntness characteristic of her race, 'My father made the most part of you out of nothing,' and as she read the King's letter she remarked, 'Master Cecil took much pains here.' This was the woman who by right would ascend the throne of England

on Edward's death, and she suffered from the twofold disability of being a Catholic and a cousin of the Emperor Charles v.

Mary's chief opponent and the most interested actor in these events was the Duke of Northumberland, who had wielded absolute power in England since the fall of Somerset in the year 1550. Few more desperate and ambitious men have played their part in the drama of human history. Born of an evil stock—his father Dudley had borne a bad name in the reign of Henry VIII.—he was possessed of an insatiable lust for power and a grim efficiency that entitles him to be set in the company of Tiberius or Caracalla. Compared to men of action like Francis, Luther, or Charles v., his character is easy of analysis. He was of the race of feudal barons who, in the Middle Ages, took up their headquarters in a forest and preyed on the country for leagues round. Like the Duke of Gueldres or William de la Marck, immortalised in Sir Walter Scott's romance, *Quentin Durward*, Northumberland had much of the common bandit in him, and like them he regarded nothing as sacred, nothing which was not his natural prey. But a century had changed the fabric of society, and the general disintegration in process during the sixteenth century gave an unrivalled opening to men of this character whose success was in proportion to their immorality. The sixteenth century is notable for its unscrupulousness, and in this point Northumberland yielded nothing to the most unprincipled of contemporaries. In addition he was thoroughly instructed in the doctrines

of Machiavellianism, and duplicity was a second nature to him. In a settled society such a man would have been reduced to the common level by continuous social pressure or else he would have burned himself out in futile strivings for power. But this was his age, he could not have come into the world at a more suitable time, for everywhere mighty forces were disintegrating the old order and everywhere the new forces were straining at the leash. Then Northumberland, like Wallenstein or Maurice of Saxony, yoked his chariot to the Reformation, and having reached the first position in the State, he now aspired to the Crown. His cruelty and greed had made him as unpopular with Protestants as Catholics, and only the person of the dying King shielded him from the fury of his enemies. If ever Mary mounted the throne his life would not be worth a week's purchase. In consequence ambition and necessity prompted him to have recourse to unlawful schemes for the exclusion of Mary from the succession. It was the logical outcome of his policy.¹

Already in the spring of 1553 the feeling was abroad that Northumberland was tampering with the succession.² It is difficult to fix the exact date at which Northumberland began conspiring to secure the throne for his own family and when he made up his mind that Lady Jane Grey should be his candidate. But the fact that Lady Jane Grey was betrothed to his son, Guildford Dudley,

¹ *Chronicle of Queen Jane*, pp. 116-21.

² *Acts of the Privy Council*, 1552-54, pp. 12, 30, 69, 81, 107, 130-31, 165, 208, 257, 263-5, etc.

shows that by the commencement of the year 1552 his schemes were in full swing. The Duke relied on his own powers of intrigue and efficiency to carry the plot to a successful conclusion. He was absolute master of Edward's mind, as is evident from his method of governing. Northumberland used secretly to visit Edward at the dead of night and give him instructions. Then in the morning Edward would enter the Council and bring forward matters as Northumberland had instructed him.¹ Edward, like Henry VIII., claimed the right to bequeath the crown by will, and Northumberland was determined that he would utilise this alleged 'right' to exclude Mary and Elizabeth from the succession and to appoint Lady Jane Grey as his successor. But, however skilfully Northumberland might lay his plans, he knew that he could not conceal the fact that this scheme was unjust and unlawful, and he was equally alive to the certainty that he would meet with fierce and stubborn opposition in many quarters. Even the Privy Council, which consisted for the most part of his own nominees, could not be trusted to support him, and so, all things considered, if his plans were to succeed, the co-operation of a foreign power would be necessary.²

Such assistance was readily offered by France. There were the strongest reasons of policy why France should assist any attempt to disinherit Mary Tudor — the Emperor's cousin. It was

¹ Raumer, *Illustrations*, vol. ii. pp. 78-9.

² *Chronicle of Queen Jane*, p. 25. *Journal of Edward VI.*, pp. 409, 463, 465. *Acts of Privy Council*, 1552-54, pp. 176-81, 185-6, 257.

known in France that Mary had opened her heart to Charles v., and it was thought that the latter was already revolving in his mind ambitious matrimonial projects. Mary could be induced to marry Philip, and if God blessed that union with an heir, that heir would succeed to England and Burgundy, leaving to Philip's first-born, Don Carlos, Spain and the Spanish dominions in Italy. Caught between the upper and nether millstones of the Empire and England, France would be ground to powder. The *fleur-de-lis* would disappear from the exposed points on the French frontier, while the Imperial eagle would behold the dominion of the Caesars renewed under the House of Hapsburg. It was manifestly to their interest that the succession should be upset, and therefore they were ready to extend the fullest support to Northumberland's designs. But if Mary Tudor was to be kept out there was no reason why Lady Jane Grey need necessarily be put in, and the real intention of France was to bring forward Mary Queen of Scots as a candidate at the right moment. This scheme offered many attractions, for not only was Mary Queen of Scots half a Frenchwoman by birth but she was also betrothed to the Dauphin, so that if she attained the throne of England France would acquire at a single stroke England, Ireland, and Scotland. It may be taken as certain that these were the actuating motives of French policy.¹ If any proof of French antipathy to a Protestant queen be needed, we would point

¹ *Papiers d'État du Cardinal de Granvelle*, vol. iv. pp. 44, 48. *Foreign Calendar*, 1553, p. 1. *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, pp. 51, 66, 67, 69, 71.

out that during those years the French court was crowded with English Catholic refugees, and that the French were still Catholic enough to desire a Catholic queen on the throne of England.¹

Northumberland's relations with France are involved in considerable obscurity, but we have enough data at our disposal to clear up the main points. During the spring of 1553 Northumberland discussed the question of the succession with Henry and secured a promise of material and moral assistance in his designs. De Noailles, the French ambassador, was charged with the conduct of these negotiations, and during May, June, and July not only held continual consultations with Northumberland but often even resided at his palace. No large conspiracy can be absolutely watertight, and certain leakages which occurred in May caused the Imperialists to suspect that Northumberland was in collusion with France to cheat Mary—the Emperor's protégée—of the throne. Jehan Scheyfve, the Imperial ambassador in London, was instructed to circumvent, if possible, these designs. Jehan Scheyfve had seen service in several courts and was a past master in the art of fathoming and frustrating conspiracies, but on this occasion his powers were tried to the uttermost, and, although he wormed out the most of Northumberland's secrets, he was unable to check the growth of the conspiracy.²

¹ *Foreign Calendar*, 1547-53 (May, June).

² Tytler, *England under Edward VI. and Mary*, vol. ii. p. 181. *Journal of Edward VI.*, p. 380. Wiesener, *La Jeunesse d'Élisabeth*, p. 89. *Papiers d'État du Cardinal de Granvelle*, vol. iv. pp. 5-10.

The plot began to thicken when Henry II.'s private secretary, L'Aubespine, arrived in London towards the end of May. Ostensibly he came to congratulate Edward on his reported recovery, but in reality he came to discuss the matter of the succession with Northumberland, and, if possible, to bring the negotiations to a conclusion. The English ambassadors in France suspected that some such business was on foot in spite of French assurances that L'Aubespine was merely engaged in a congratulatory mission to Edward. First L'Aubespine informed Northumberland that Charles V. was actively working on behalf of Mary, and this communication was allowed a certain publicity for the purpose of stirring up national feeling against Mary as the favourite of the foreigner.¹ This alleged interference of Charles V. in English affairs could also be made the pretence for asking French assistance. Jealousy of foreign interference was a great driving power in England, and Northumberland was probably afraid lest the introduction of French troops into England should provoke a reaction in Mary's favour. The following extract from a letter addressed by the Lords of Council to the English ambassadors at the French court illustrates this particular aspect of Northumberland's intrigues :

And in the end you shall know that His Majesty's ambassador's here have shewed unto us that which he had in charge from his Majesty, by his letters, touching the diction of certain practices of the Emperor, intended

¹ Lodge, *Illustrations*, vol. i. pp. 204, 214, 226.

with the Lady Mary, to the danger of this Realm, for the avoiding whereof his Majesty, like a prince of great honour, offers such help as he may conveniently, where surely his Majesty shows himself so worthy of praise and thanks, of us and all his Realm, as we shall never forget this his so great friendship in so difficult times, although we doubt not that the estate and power of this realm shall by God's goodness, prevail against all manner of practices or attempts either by the Emperor or any other.¹

L'Aubespine, however, did not confine himself to warnings against Charles v. It is difficult to trace the exact course of his negotiations, for the reason that his instructions were too confidential to be put on paper. The substance of his negotiations, however, would seem to be somewhat as follows, and it is here that the Irish question re-enters the stage. France was to give Northumberland military assistance in his settlement of the succession after the decease of Edward, in return for which Ireland was to be handed over to the French. Other authorities state that Calais and Guines were also included in the bargain. Those were immense concessions to France, but Northumberland was playing for high stakes, and he could not afford to dispense with the assistance of France.² Probably he salved his own conscience with the reflection that if he came off the victor he could repudiate those treaty obligations.

¹ Lodge, *Illustrations*, vol. i. p. 226.

² *The Accession of Queen Mary* (a contemporary narrative of Antonio de Guaras, Spanish merchant resident in London), ed. R. Garnett, p. 86. *Mémoires de Noailles*, vol. ii. pp. 52, 53. *Lettres et Mémoires d'État*, Ribier, t. ii. p. 272.

How far the French took the Irish into their confidence it is hard to say. There is no direct evidence that they secured or thought it necessary to secure the assent of the Irish chieftains. On the other hand, the extreme activity of French interference in Ireland all during the year 1553, and the fact that there were several outbursts of revolt, suggests the probability that at least some of the Irish were in the secret. The Imperial ambassadors were the first to ascertain what terms the French had extorted from Northumberland. In May Jehan Scheyfve informed the Emperor that 'the Duke of Northumberland and his party are planning to prevent the succession of Lady Mary, and they will barter Ireland in preference to allowing that princess to mount the throne.'¹ This was followed by an account of L'Aubespine's relations with Northumberland, in which he repeats the assertion that Northumberland was prepared to surrender Ireland to France in return for French assistance. This despatch is dated 30th May and describes L'Aubespine's mission as follows: 'During the Whitsuntide holidays M. de L'Aubespine, First Secretary to the King of France, who, as I hear, besides occupying this high position, enjoys the full confidence of the King and Constable, arrived here in a coach drawn by four horses. He went to the Court with M. de Boisdaphin on the 28th. They were very honourably received and entertained, almost all the members of the Privy Council were present, even to the Duke of Northumberland who had

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, p. 46.

been absent from court for a few days. L'Aubespine's mission is surrounded with the greatest mystery,' etc. 'Some say that M. de L'Aubespine has been sent to visit the King and take the same opportunity to offer the King of France's services to the Duke of Northumberland in the event of the King's death,' etc. 'The Duke and his party designs to deprive the Lady Mary of the Succession of the Crown are only too plain. They are evidently determined to resort to arms against her, with the excuse of religion, amongst others. It is believed that they would rather give up Ireland to the French or at least hold out hopes of it than allow the Princess to mount the throne.'¹ Jehan Scheyfve's surmises were correct to the letter, as future events proved.

As the summer advanced Northumberland's intentions could no longer be mistaken. In Edward's sickroom he worked his will with consummate ability. For years he had trained Edward to regard himself as God's chosen instrument for the destruction of Romanism, and now he had no difficulty in convincing him of the necessity of disinheriting Mary and Elizabeth and of appointing Lady Jane Grey as his successor. A slight forgery completed the work, and by the close of May letters patent were drawn up to legalise the succession of Lady Jane Grey.² The next step was to procure the authorisation of the chief-justices and law officers, and for this purpose they were summoned to court on 11th June.

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, pp. 46, 51, 61.

² *Journal of Edward VI.*, pp. 561-76.

After some difficulty Northumberland overcame the scruples of the Privy Council, and De Noailles, who was watching every turn of affairs, commented on the satisfaction which they displayed once they had come to an agreement. But the legal authorities were not so easily managed. On 12th June they reported that not only was it treasonable to carry out such a scheme on Edward's death, but that they would be acting treasonably if they assisted in its preparation. On 13th June they reported this answer to the Council, at which Northumberland broke out into fierce imprecations and called Chief-Justice Montague a traitor. The justices departed in fear and trembling, and on the 15th they were summoned to Edward's presence. He rebuked them sternly for their disobedience, while the angry lords hissed the words 'traitors' at them as they passed from the room. There was nothing for it but acquiescence, and so finally the justices, consoling themselves with the reflection that at least they were 'traitors' in good company, 'with sorrowful hearts and weeping eyes' consented. At length the instrument was completed and ratified on the 21st.¹ So far success had attended Northumberland's schemes, but with characteristic thoroughness he was determined to leave nothing to chance. The large fortresses were garrisoned with his own men, armed ships were brought up the Thames, and the discontented lords were summoned to court—the usual preliminary to arrest. Thus in the June of 1553

¹ Fuller, *Church History*, 1656, bk. viii. (in one folio), pp. 2-6.

Northumberland waited only for the death of Edward to seize the crown of England for his family.¹

Meanwhile Mary was calmly awaiting the day when she would be called to ascend the English throne. The Imperial ambassadors² had warned her that a plot was brewing to deprive her of the succession, but she may have been deceived by Northumberland's anxious solicitude for her health and comfort. She was credulous and simple-minded to a fault, and Soranzo, the Venetian ambassador, actually states that her own friends on the Council were afraid to give her any information lest she should reveal it to the Duke.³

The Imperial diplomatists alone realised the full extent of her danger. They were fully cognisant of Northumberland's designs on the throne and were also aware that he had purchased the assistance of France at the cost of Ireland. Charles v. had despatched a special embassy to England in June to deal with the dangerous situation which had arisen. The shrewdest head in the Imperial diplomatic service, Simon Renard, was a member of the embassy. Charles himself gave elaborate instructions as to the course which they were to adopt, and a few sentences from the memoir

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, pp. 49, 52, 57. *Mémoires du Duc de Guise*, p. 86. *Acts of Privy Council*, May, June, 1553.

² *Venetian Calendar*, vol. v. p. 537.

³ At this moment the Empire was in a terrible plight. Germany was in rebellion, the Turks were threatening Naples, Spanish troops were in mutiny, and Charles v. himself was to all appearances on his death-bed.

will illustrate what a clear grasp he had of the essentials :

We will only make a few observations suggested to us by news we have received from England, and our forecast of what is likely to happen there, and the opinions of several persons on the spot. If the king dies they (*i.e.* the party in power) will endeavour to prevent our cousin from coming to the throne, partly because she is constant in our ancient faith, and partly because they fear we may favour and protect her as our near relative, and marry her to some stranger who might operate changes in the government, which is what the interested parties most dread. It is also possible that their ambition may lead them on to aim at the throne themselves, and it is feared they may seek support, moved either by fear of us or by ambition, from the French, who are sure to be making magnificent offers at this moment and may perhaps really intend to send them the help they ask for with the object of getting a foothold in England, and, then, when they are strong enough, overthrowing their allies.¹

The Imperialists, knowing the dangers of Mary's position as they did, were filled with misgivings as to the future, and took such a gloomy view of the situation that they declared resistance to be hopeless since no aid from abroad was expected, whereas Northumberland could rely on French assistance, and carried the keys of England at his girdle.² For instance, the day after Edward's death the Imperial ambassadors, in a report to the Emperor, said: 'Be that as it may we see small likelihood of being able to withstand the

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, p. 63.

² *Papiers d'État du Cardinal de Granvelle*, vol. iv. pp. 19-20, 20-21.

Duke's designs ; and he has secured the support of the French in case he finds it necessary to have recourse to them, for as we have already said, he has been negotiating for a long time past with L'Aubespine and the French ambassador.' ¹

But the Imperialists overlooked two factors which were destined to transform the situation. They failed to attach sufficient importance to the innate conservatism of the English people—their stubborn adherence to constitutional right—a characteristic which has stood them in good stead in many a crisis of their history. Secondly, they were not sufficiently alive to the greatness of Mary Tudor. Mary might be credulous, but once roused she was like a highly tempered blade—strong and supple. There was a Spanish strain in her blood which made her a born fighter, and she was the last woman in the world likely to submit to force.

Then at last on 6th July the King died, and for three days his death was kept a profound secret in order that Northumberland might complete his plans. For those three days the fate of England and perhaps of Ireland trembled in the balance. All that now was wanting to ensure the complete success of Northumberland's plans was the possession of Mary's person, and Northumberland believed that he had already closed every loophole of escape. But Mary had been warned in time,² and on the night of the King's

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, p. 72. *Papiers d'État du Cardinal de Granvelle*, Weiss, vol. iv. pp. 16-22.

² *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, pp. 70, 72. *Venetian Calendar*, vol. v. p. 537.

death she was on the road to Suffolk riding for life and crown. On the news of her flight the Council sent letters far and wide denouncing her as a traitress and calling for her apprehension.¹ Meanwhile Lady Jane Grey was proclaimed Queen, and Northumberland spoke of his son as 'King' of England. But he was reckoning without his host. Mary acted with extraordinary energy, called the people to rally round her to defend the right, and in response thousands flocked to her standard. Events marched rapidly, and on the 13th Northumberland left London to command the military forces.²

Victory hung in the balance, and as Northumberland believed that French assistance would turn the scale he despatched Henry Dudley, a distant cousin, to press the French for immediate military assistance in accordance with the terms of their alliance. The French promised to do their uttermost, and prepared military expeditions at Boulogne and Dieppe which were designed in all probability not so much to further the cause of Northumberland as to place Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne.³ The Imperial ambassadors both in England and France realised the significance of this embassy and stated in their reports to the Emperor that French assistance would be forthcoming to Northumberland

¹ Guaras, *Accession of Queen Mary* (ed. R. Garnett), p. 90. Haynes, *State Papers*, p. 107.

² *Papiers d'État du Cardinal de Granvelle*, Weiss, vol. ix. p. 28.

³ *Foreign Calendar*, 1553-58, pp. 1-5. *Spanish Calendar*, pp. 76, 79, 81, 87, 95, 97, 98, 99. *Papiers d'État du Cardinal de Granvelle*, vol. iv. pp. 73, 74.

at the cost of Ireland, Calais, and Guines. For instance, in a despatch to the Emperor dated 22nd July, Simon Renard states: 'In the meantime more has been learned about the intrigues with the French, and it is strongly suspected that he (Sir Henry Dudley) had agreed with the King of France to hand him over Calais, Guines, and Ireland, in exchange for which he was to be assisted and recognised, he or his son as King of England,' etc. 'News was received to the effect that in accordance with letters from the French ambassador here some ships were being made ready at Dieppe and Boulogne to carry help to the Duke.'¹ Having successfully carried out his mission Sir Henry Dudley prepared to return to England. Before he set out Henry informed him that he would send a special envoy, M. de Gyé, Bishop of Orleans, to represent him at London, and further requested Dudley to carry certain letters of recognition to Lady Jane Grey. Ill-luck seemed to dog the steps of the conspirators, for on his way to England Sir Henry Dudley was arrested by Lord William Howard, Governor of Calais, and on being searched the incriminating correspondence was found. 'He' (Lord William Howard, Governor of Calais), reported the Imperial ambassadors in England to the Emperor, 'had arrested Henry Dudley, cousin of the Duke of Northumberland, who was on his way back from France with letters

¹ The Imperial ambassadors sometimes confuse Sir Henry Dudley, who sued France for help, with Northumberland's brother Sir Andrew Dudley. 'The Ambassadors in England to the Emperor,' 22nd July, *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, p. 113.

from the King to the Lady Jane of Suffolk whom he styled 'Queen of England,' etc. His correspondence was forwarded to the Council and disclosed most important information in regard to Northumberland's practice with the French.¹

While Sir Henry Dudley had been abroad in France hurrying up the French succours, dramatic developments had been taking place in England. A spontaneous national movement had sprung up, as it were, in a single night, and before Northumberland was well on the march armies seemed to start from the earth to dispute his progress. He was hardly out of sight of the Privy Council when they began to intrigue against him, and by the 16th it was clear that his cause was lost. Men like Cecil and Arundel, as well as all the vilest species in the political order, deserted the sinking ship, and to use their own words, took measures 'for stealing down' to Mary.² Meanwhile Mary advanced towards London amidst the rejoicing of the people, and it is significant to note that the words *vox populi, vox Dei*,³ were inscribed on the banners of some who came out to welcome her. This magic formula of democracy was already on the lips of men, but its counter principle, 'the right divine of kings,' was in the hearts of rulers, and nowhere found such zealous champions as in the Houses of the Tudors and Stuarts.

On 20th July, just a fortnight after Edward's

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, pp. 90, 123, 124. *Acts of Privy Council*, 1552-59, pp. 310, 315.

² *Domestic Calendar*, July 1553. Tytler, *England under Edward VI. and Mary*, vol. ii. pp. 175-204.

³ *Spanish Calendar*, 1553.

death, bonfires and Te Deums proclaimed that the conflict was over and that Mary Tudor was Queen of England. On the same day Northumberland, who had fallen back on Cambridge, entered the market-place of that town, and crying aloud that Mary was right and lawful queen, tossed his hat into the air—while the tears ran down his cheeks. On the 24th he was arrested and taken to the Tower, where he was soon joined by the most conspicuous of his fellow conspirators, and amongst others by Sir Henry Dudley, whose activities in France we have already discussed.¹

Mary, except where religion was concerned, was a merciful ruler, and the leniency with which she treated the traitors is almost unprecedented in Tudor history. Many of the chief culprits were released, and only Northumberland and a few of his immediate associates were reserved for a sterner fate. On 18th August their trial commenced, and the accused were indicted upon their own confessions. In the course of the trial considerable light was thrown on Northumberland's negotiations with France, and the suggestion that he was contemplating the surrender of Calais, Guines, and Ireland is amply confirmed. Sir Henry Dudley had confessed his own part in these negotiations, and the papers discovered on his person at the time of his arrest by Lord William Howard, Governor of Calais, were also put in evidence. The substance of these matters is con-

¹ *Chronicle of Queen Jane*, pp. 11-12. Guaras, *Accession of Queen Mary* (ed. R. Garnett), pp. 95-9.

tained in a report submitted by Simon Renard to Prince Philip: 'With regard to the intrigues with France—they were confessed by Sir Henry Dudley, cousin of Northumberland. The said Dudley was caught on his way back at Guines from France and shut up in the Tower. He was found carrying a letter from the King of France addressed to the said Jane with the title Queen of England, congratulating her on her accession to the throne, and accrediting the said Dudley to her for answer of her message. When Dudley was questioned on the subject he confessed that the King of France told him that he would employ his forces by land and sea, and would sooner forsake his present enterprise against the Emperor on the field than break his promise to the Duke, even to offering his person in his service. It was also discovered that the Duke had promised to hand over to the French Calais, Guines, and Hames, the English possessions on the mainland, and Ireland. In confirmation of the credentials given already to the said Sir Henry Dudley, the King of France despatched the Bishop of Orleans, M. de Gyé, knight of his Order, to cross over to this country, and under pretext of assuming the protection of the said Jane and her throne bring the said intrigues to a head.'¹ Northumberland was condemned to be executed, and on the 21st, having first recanted his Protestantism, the sentence was carried out. Had he succeeded in his desperate enterprise it would certainly have been the signal for an English civil war, in the course of which,

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, p. 208.

doubtless, Ireland would have established its independence.

Concurrently with the Northumberland conspiracy the French were actively working in Ireland, where their efforts were attended with some success, for during the course of the year 1553 the O'Connors were noticeably restless, and in the months of August and September rose in arms and harried the Pale, while the O'Neills, aided by the Scots, raided as far east as Dundalk.¹ The country was generally agitated throughout the entire year, and although it is impossible for lack of data to enlarge on the origin and nature of the disturbances, it is a noteworthy fact that the Scots were much to the fore, and indeed there can be no doubt had been sent over to assist the Irish by Mary of Guise,² who, as formerly, had her fingers in all the schemes directed against English authority in Ireland. The rumours of these events were widely reverberated. For instance, one evening towards the close of March Peter Vannes, the English agent at Venice, happened to find himself seated next the Papal legate at a public festival, and, like men of the world, despite their religious differences, they entered into amicable conversation the substance of which the Englishman repeated in his next communication to the Council. 'The Bishop of Rome's legate,' he wrote, 'inquired how affairs were in Ireland. I told him never before was the Realm in so safe and quiet a state. The legate then asked if

¹ Cox, *History of Ireland*, p. 298. Ware, *Annals of Ireland*, p. 131.

² *Foreign Calendar*, 1553-58, pp. 22, 23, 24.

the insurrection in Ireland was suppressed, for at Rome it was reported—the news coming from France—that the Scottish Queen was practicing with some of the Irish nobles for the disturbance and conquest of the country,’¹ etc.

During the months of June and July French interests had been mainly centred in London where the life of Edward VI. was drawing to a close. But, as we have seen, the Northumberland conspiracy ran but a short and fatal course, and when on 18th August the Duke himself perished on the scaffold, the French, having shot their bolt in England, returned to the more profitable work of blowing on the coals of rebellion in Ireland. The results of their occupation was immediately seen in the rebellion of the O’Connors, who, from minor raids on the Pale, now embarked on more serious operations against English power.

¹ *Foreign State Papers*, 1547-53, p. 259.

Soranzo, the Venetian ambassador in England during Mary’s reign, has left on record an account of Ireland which is of the deepest interest as an expression of foreign opinion on the character of the Irish. For us it has the additional value of supplying information on the rebellion of 1553, where information is provokingly absent. ‘They’ (the Irish), writes Soranzo, ‘are naturally very religious and catholic, so that in the time of King Edward there were several rebellions, which although suppressed at the time have again broken out, and the majority of the population refuse obedience to the Queen, and govern themselves under a chieftain called the Great O’Neill, whom they talk of making their king. The principal towns, the chief of which is Dublin, remain in the hands of the Queen, but the country has almost entirely rebelled, and last winter, when some troops were sent for its recovery, they failed completely. Since then nothing has been done, save that the government is endeavouring to bring them back to their allegiance by negotiation, and by so much the more as without a preponderating force coercion would be vain, as the Irish are a very warlike race, who set little value by their lives,’ etc. (*Venetian Calendar*, 1534-54, p. 546.)

The English put forth their full strength against the insurgents, with the result that they had to take refuge in their strongholds, whence they occasionally sallied out during the autumn months. The French were almost certainly involved in those movements, and a turn of events which now occurred in England caused them to throw themselves into the Irish enterprise more wholeheartedly than ever.

In the month of September the great question at the English court was on whom would Mary Tudor bestow her hand—would she marry a Frenchman, an Imperialist, or an Englishman? Mary herself showed a decided preference for the Emperor's candidate, Philip of Spain, and in August the House of Commons had dared to remonstrate with her and had begged her to marry an Englishman.¹ But opposition had only served to confirm Mary in her resolution to marry Philip. Looking back on those events across the Armada and the reign of Elizabeth, it is easy to exaggerate the national antipathy to a match between Philip and Mary. Hatred between England and Spain did not assume formidable proportions till about the year 1560. In the mid-sixteenth century France was the national enemy of England, and when Englishmen objected to Philip as a husband for Mary it was rather because he was a foreigner than because he was a Spaniard. On the other hand, Mary could argue that this alliance with Spain was founded upon a substantial community of interest. English foreign policy for ages had

¹ *Venetian Calendar*, 1534-54, p. 560.

been based upon the principle of the Burgundian alliance and had favoured the maintenance of close commercial intercourse with the Netherlands. Here English commerce had found its best markets, and the English woollen trade depended for its subsistence on peaceful relations between the two countries. Then, as it was necessary that England should choose between the two great houses on the Continent—the House of Hapsburg or the House of Valois—they naturally inclined towards the Hapsburgs, who controlled the Netherlands. The most serious objection that could be urged against the Spanish marriage was the religious one, and this was more than counterbalanced by the general fears which the English entertained as to French designs on Calais and Ireland. The English ministers were fully cognisant of the seditious activities which France had promoted in Ireland since 1543, and now when they saw those disturbances renewed before their own eyes, they were seriously perturbed lest one morning they should hear that Ireland was in the hands of French troops. Again, the French were casting greedy eyes at Calais. Altogether Mary and her ministers believed that the Spanish match would be an insurance against French schemes, and used these arguments to reconcile the English people to the prospect of having a Spaniard for their king.¹

In the month of October the die was cast. Mary called Simon Renard, the Imperial ambassador, to her presence and solemnly declared her

¹ Guaras, *Accession of Queen Mary* (ed. R. Garnett), p. 113.

intention of giving her hand to Philip.¹ Imperial diplomacy, therefore, had scored a decisive victory and French diplomacy had suffered an equally momentous defeat. But the French had not yet come to the end of their resources, and through De Noailles, the French ambassador, they endeavoured by fair means or foul—by conspiracy and persuasion—to postpone the marriage between Philip and Mary. De Noailles was soon hand-in-glove with all the malcontents in England, while in Ireland, the classic soil of rebellion, they redoubled their efforts. Our principal informants with regard to the obscure movements of the French in Ireland are the indefatigable Simon Renard and his colleagues, who mentioned everything that had any bearing on the marriage alliance in their reports to the Emperor. If we are to believe them, and as a rule their despatches are well informed and accurate, in the month of September the French were organising an expedition for the invasion of Ireland. ‘News have been received here,’ they reported to the Emperor, ‘that the French are preparing to execute a plan conceived some time ago of making an attack on Ireland to seize two places that might be converted into two roomy harbours, able to hold one thousand ships or more. With these ports in their possession the French might harm the English, and aid Scotland, and prevent or at least render difficult your Majesties fisheries, commerce, and

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, ‘Renard to Charles v.,’ 31st October 1553. *Ambassades de Monsieur de Noailles en Angleterre*, par l’Abbé Vertot, vol. ii. pp. 260-65.

carrying trade. Intrigues seem to be going on in Ireland similar to those promoted by Monluc at the time of the last war between England and France.' ¹ The exact course which French activities took in Ireland is so obscure that it is possible to give but the merest outline of its principal features. In other countries national governments have played the part of fairy god-mother and saved the national records from destruction and have finally given them publication in the fullest form. But in Ireland the absence of a national government, combined with the fact that the country was almost always engaged in a life-and-death conflict, has had the result that we are, broadly speaking, without national archives or national records. Irish history, therefore, has largely to be built up out of the materials scattered in English and Continental archives.

We have seen that Simon Renard had informed his master that large French designs were on foot for the invasion of Ireland, and we may be confident that he imparted his knowledge of the matter to the English Government, which was already on the alert for French traffic in Ireland. At the same time a Frenchman called Guillaume Pepyn was arrested in Ireland and conveyed to London, where we may presume the rack extorted all the secrets which he was not pleased to disclose of his free will. If he made a confession it has not yet come to light, but there may be some con-

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, p. 338. Gachard, *Voyage des Souverains des Pays-Bas* (Appendix to vol. iv.).

nection between the capture of this Frenchman and the report which Renard presented to the Emperor about the same time, in which he asserts that the French and Scots were at the root of the troubles in Ireland.¹ Any doubts which may still continue to exist with regard to French complicity in the Irish conspiracy are finally removed by a despatch addressed on 14th October by the French ambassador in London, De Noailles, to Mary of Guise, Queen-Dowager of Scotland. He plumes himself in this communication on the excellent results which French diplomacy has achieved in Ireland, and advises her to send other 'trusty and efficient persons' to that country for the purpose of adding fuel to the flames. If any further proof of French interference in Ireland during the autumn of 1553 were needed, it is provided by a sentence in a letter addressed by De Noailles to the King of France on 17th October: 'As I have previously informed you,' he writes, 'several disaffected gentlemen of this kingdom have since the departure of M. de Gyé, Bishop of Orleans, approached me and urged on me a scheme for stirring up a rebellion in England as in Ireland.'²

Having finally settled the complicity of France in Irish intrigues, it remains to follow the efforts which De Noailles made to frustrate the proposed marriage between Mary and Philip. De Noailles

¹ *Acts of Privy Council*, 1552-54, p. 393. *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, pp. 335, 358, 359. Gachard, *Voyage des Souverains des Pays-Bas* (Appendix to vol. iv.).

² *Ambassades de Monsieur de Noailles en Angleterre*, par l'Abbé Vertot, vol. ii. pp. 221, 222.

threw himself recklessly into all kinds of enterprises against Mary both in England and Ireland. His partial responsibility for the Wyatt rebellion is hardly a matter of doubt, while his activities in Ireland were, if anything, more persistent and widespread than ever. They did not long escape the attention of the English Council, who eventually asked De Noailles to explain his conduct. Before the Council De Noailles denied French complicity in Irish designs, and then and there disavowed his own connection with them.¹ However, it was not easy to throw dust in the eyes of ministers who had lived through the stress of late times, and the very completeness of De Noailles' denial seems only to have increased their suspicions as to his relations with Ireland. If French schemes were to succeed they must be carried on in the dark, and accordingly De Noailles now hit upon a new expedient for disarming English suspicion. It was a common trick of governments in those days to write despatches which were meant to be intercepted, and in such a despatch addressed to De Noailles from the French king the latter says: 'As for their suspicions to the effect that I am giving support and countenance to the rebels in Ireland I approve of your conduct in denying the fact openly and publicly before the Lords of Council,' etc. 'You may impress on the Queen that she will find in me a close and constant friend.' Again on 17th November, in another despatch to De

¹ *Ambassades de Monsieur de Noailles en Angleterre*, par l'Abbé Vertot, vol. ii. pp. 267, 282.

Noailles, Henry says: 'Above all, you ought to set her (Mary Tudor) mind at rest with regard to Ireland.'¹

However, even these elaborate repudiations do not seem to have convinced the English of France's innocence where Ireland was concerned, for Simon Renard continued to send alarming accounts of French designs in Ireland to the Emperor.² A month later Mary personally told Renard that measures were being taken to put the 'strong places' in Ireland in a proper state of defence against all possibility of a French invasion, and a few days afterwards she asserted her belief that the French were up to their old mischief in Ireland.³ Mary believed that danger threatened as much from Scotland as from France, and in consequence she instructed her agents in Scotland to make a formal protest against French interference in Ireland. The Queen-Dowager of Scotland, Mary of Guise, refers to these protests in a letter to De Noailles. 'The English commissioners,' she writes, 'have likewise complained that our agents were practicing in Ireland, and have asked us to account for them, to which we made answer that if they find them they may punish them, because for our part we have no knowledge of them. However they distrust me because on former occasions I have been in communication

¹ *Ambassades de Monsieur de Noailles en Angleterre*, par l'Abbé Vertot, pp. 248, 288.

² *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, pp. 359, 371. Gachard, *Voyage des Souverains des Pays-Bas* (Appendix to vol. iv.).

³ *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, p. 440.

with the Irish.’¹ The French and Scots, therefore, continued to correspond and encourage the Irish in the hope that a formidable rebellion would give Mary something else to think of than the Spanish alliance. But they were doomed to disappointment — the Irish had no intention of burning their fingers again unless they had some proof that it would be to their advantage. Then the last few years had taught them the folly of relying on French promises. In a word, the Irish were too wary to rise in rebellion without the actual presence in Ireland of the French auxiliary force.

Abroad these Franco-Irish intrigues attracted some attention, largely because the keenest eyes in Europe were watching the progress of the Spanish marriage negotiations, and the shrewdest minds in the diplomatic world did not omit Ireland from their calculations when they were weighing up the pros and cons of the situation. For instance, in the month of October, in reply to a letter which Renard wrote to the King of the Romans and in which he touches on the Franco-British intrigues, the King of the Romans, who had not previously encountered Ireland in his diplomatic excursions, made the amusing inquiry : ‘ Likewise as to what you write about the trouble the King of France is causing the Irish whose rebellion he supports, to inflict on the Queen (Mary Tudor). We would like to know more details, and what jurisdiction the late King Henry, and also he that lately died (Ed. VI.) possessed

¹ *Ambassades de Monsieur de Noailles en Angleterre*, vol. ii. p. 304.

in Ireland, how much they held there, and how much the present queen has a right, together with other details you think might help us to grasp these questions.’¹ These inquiries are of value in so far as they help to prove that in the mind of the average contemporary Continental ruler the rights claimed by England in Ireland were vague and debatable.

The year 1553 passed without rebellion in Ireland producing the results which the French hoped for. In January 1554 the Imperial ambassadors arrived in London to conclude the marriage negotiations, and a few days later Gardiner read the marriage treaty before an assembly of lords and gentlemen at Westminster. The French had to put the best face on the matter, and while they pretended to acquiesce in Mary’s policy, they continued to incite her enemies whenever they could. Apparently they considered the situation beyond retrieve, and their activities in Ireland slackened considerably. Notwithstanding, Renard continued to have his suspicions about the French in Ireland, and in the winter of 1554 he mentions the strange conduct of the French ambassador, who, having treated the Privy Councillors to a magnificent banquet, and when they were full of wine and geniality, asked them to procure a general permit allowing all French vessels to trade in the Irish seas. The English, however, ‘seeing what it meant to Ireland,’ refused his request. In this they may have been actuated by economic as much as political motives, but certainly they

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, p. 402.

showed themselves, even in the winter of 1554, suspicious of French influence in Ireland. At the same time it was rumoured widely that a French expedition was waiting in Brittany for favourable winds to bring it to Ireland, but like all the expeditions, this phantom expedition never materialised as far as the Irish were concerned. Such rumours in a greater or less degree continued to disturb the slumbers of English ministers until the end of Mary's reign. But France, in the current language of diplomacy, was only giving the Irish 'fair words,' and the Irish were beginning to understand the distinctions which divided the polite professions of these diplomatists from an occasional serious utterance.¹

Withal, the French and Irish lived on terms of friendship, and there can be no doubt that Frenchmen were full of the kindest intentions towards their friends. This continual political intercourse with France was not without important results. It served to bring Ireland into the horizon of Continental states as an excellent basis for operations against England. Thus Ireland re-entered the European system as a distinct state entity. In Ireland itself the connection with France proved even more fertile in immediate and ultimate benefits. The blows of the French hammer dealt lightly but continuously on the Irish polity were to the good, for they helped to weld the country into a centrally organised state. Then those constant appeals for assistance to a foreign power intensified the sense of race consciousness and

¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 1553, p. 415.

enabled the abler spirits to see the defects in the Irish system and to devise a remedy for them. Forty years later Red Hugh grasped the truth that until Ireland moved as a single man there could be little chance of expelling the invader.

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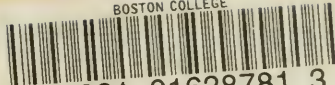
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